THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER

919
HENRY SNYDER HIGH SCHOOL,
BERGEN AND MYRTLE AVENUES,
JERSEY CITY, N

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THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER

MAP I—THE WANDERINGS OF ODYSSEUS: THE KNOWN WORLD

THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER

TRANSLATED
INTO ENGLISH VERSE
BY
HERBERT BATES

HENRY SNYDER HIGH SCHOOL,
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JERSEY CITY, N. J.

919

School Edition

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THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER

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To My Wife

CONTENTS

FOREWORD xi

INTRODUCTION xv

- Homeric Days xvi
- Religion xviii
- The *Odyssey* as a Story xxiii
- The *Iliad* xxv
- The Form of the *Odyssey* xxviii
- Pronunciation xxxi
- Meter xxxii
- The World of Homer's Day xxxiii

TO THE TEACHER xxxvi

- Specific Teaching Suggestions xl

THE ODYSSEY 1

APPENDIX 391

- Omitted Passages 391
- Abridgments 392
- Comments upon the Story 393
- Life in Homer's Day 408
  - The House 408
  - Dress 410
  - Ships 412
  - The Bow 412
  - Shooting through the Axes 413
- Outline of the Action 414
- Important Proper Names 420
- Pronunciation of Proper Names 426

ILLUSTRATIONS

Map I—The Wanderings of Odysseus: The Known World	Frontispiece	
Map II—The Wanderings of Odysseus: The Unknown World	facing page	1
The Swift Ship of Odysseus	"	134
Probable Plan of Odysseus' Home	"	258
Dress of Homer's Day	page	411
Stringing the Bow	facing page	412
Ancient Greek Axes	page	413

FOREWORD

FEW high school students now read the *Odyssey* in the original. But this should not mean that few high school students to-day read the *Odyssey*. It goes against every instinct of those of us who read the great story in our own schooldays, to be content that students of to-day should miss an experience that meant so much to us.

It is only by translations that we can bridge the gap; and the more bridges we have, the more chance there is that every reader can find one to his taste. I have tried, in this particular translation, to bring out those qualities of the *Odyssey* that have most appealed to me, certain qualities of mood and light narrative swiftness that I have hoped to emphasize.

I am aware of all the advantages of translation into prose, and I have the highest admiration for the beautiful prose translations. Yet to me the *Odyssey* is essentially a poem and I cannot think of it as in any but poetic form. Homer's Pegasus was meant to fly, not to walk, and I have done my utmost to get this English version of his inspiration to rise from the flat surface of daily prose. It has seemed to me, ever since I was a boy, that it must be possible, in some form of English verse, to tell Homer's story lightly, swiftly, and with some hint or echo of its lyric quality.

The form I have chosen, iambic tetrameter blank verse, bears the same relation to the ordinary English tetrameter couplet (as found in Scott's *Lady of the Lake*) that regular English blank verse bears to the so-called heroic couplet. It abandons rhyme, uses the feminine ending freely, and places pauses with great

variety, avoiding an end-stopped line. The result is a verse hitherto seldom used in English poetry, yet a verse that is simple to read, native to the spirit of English writing, and, as I see it, peculiarly fitted for the purpose in hand. The absence of stanza or of couplet form avoids conflict with the division of the thought in the original and the short lines readily combine into longer phrasings to suit the length of the Homeric line. The form is so varied in effect that it fits the wide Homeric range of expression, from the meeting of slain kings in the Land of Death to the killing and cutting up of a fat pig; from the childish pleadings of Nausicaä standing before her grave father to the terrible anger of Odysseus as, bow in hand, he leaps to the shining threshold.

English blank verse has no less flexibility; yet, in translation, few have been able to keep it fluent and lyric. Some deadly tradition is always leading the blank-verse translator of Homer into classical grandiloquence. The change to the new form I have chosen has, I feel, given me something of the freedom that the actor finds when he acts Shakespeare "in modern dress."

As for the form used by Homer himself, the dactylic hexameter, no more perfect narrative meter has ever been devised than this is—in Greek. In English it is not suited to the spirit of the language. Excellent poems have been written in it, but very little good translation, for it leaves the man who writes it well no freedom to deal with the poet he translates. It also refuses, in spite of Longfellow's considerable success, to run freely in narration. (An examination of the short passage on page xxviii will make my meaning clearer.)

On the whole, then, I have found the new form best suited to my purpose. I think it will be found easy to read. I hope the reader will read it as verse, with recog-

nition of the division into lines. In most cases the line division will be found in harmony with the division of the thought. In almost every line a slight pause, at least a hesitation, is expected at the end of the line. Homer himself is always conscious of his line and the original delivery of the poem must have brought each line out clearly.

As a result, the reader gets a tune, a movement of verse, that is in no way like that of the original hexameter. He will get, however, I hope, a tune and movement that is to English what the original tune was to Greek—a light, rapid, lyric narrative form that lets the story show through. For one thing to remember about Homer, as about Chaucer, is that he was one of those few poets who, no matter how noble, imaginative, and delicate his poetry, never for a moment lost sight of the fact that he was telling a story. His story always moves and never stops, as much modern poetry does, to sing its own chorus. It is this effect that I have tried to reproduce.

This translation is considerably abridged. Only by such abridgment could the book be kept within convenient limits. It seemed better to have a short readable version than one whose length would discourage the reader. The omissions are, in the main, those recommended by the College Entrance Board. A few minor additional omissions have been made, indicated by the usual symbols, while, on the other hand, a few passages from the books usually omitted have been retained. Every effort has been made not to harm the story in its essential lines or to omit details whose omission might subtract from the color and spirit of the poem.

The translation is usually literal. In certain cases, where authorities differ, I have chosen the translation that seemed to me to have the greater literary appeal.

With regard to epithets, patronymics, and place names, I have sometimes taken the liberty that Homer takes himself, of using them or not using them according to the needs of the line. I have generally kept proper names to a minimum, for a long Greek name that slips lightly by in the original, stands out in an English version like an island in mid-stream, checking the flow of the story.

I feel that my own appreciation and enjoyment of Homer is owing in large part to two of my early teachers, Henry Bailey of Chauncy Hall School in Boston, and James G. Croswell of Harvard. I hope that through this translation I may pass on to others some of the inspiration I got from their teaching.

HERBERT BATES

January, 1929.

INTRODUCTION

SOME three thousand years ago, there came into being two great poems, perhaps the two greatest poems in the world. We do not know who wrote them. We call their author Homer, but we do not know whether this name denotes one man or several men. It stands, like the *x* in algebra, for the unknown author.

Perhaps one supreme poet brought together and tinged with his personality a group of poems composed by lesser bards. Perhaps one inspired poet wrote the greater part of these poems and others later added other scenes and stories, copying his tone and manner. It is hardly possible that these poems as they stand can be the work of one poet. It seems equally unlikely that accident or evolution could have built up, out of the work of independent poets, two works so sustained in spirit, so symmetrical in design. Throughout both, one finds evidence of one creating or dominating mind. This mind we call Homer.

Tradition is sometimes true. Homer may, in fact, have been a wandering blind minstrel, like Demodocus. His poems were literally sung to the accompaniment of the lyre. Remember that poetry of that day was never written: it was handed down by memory, to be written later, when life grew more complex, and memories shorter. We may not unreasonably picture Homer, then, as a minstrel in the court of kings. Yet, whatever befell the aged Homer, the young Homer was never blind. No man had ever keener vision or made better use of it. If blindness came upon him in old age, it only made clearer the pictures treasured by his "inward eye."

The *Iliad* compares with the *Odyssey* as high peaks compare with wooded hills. It rises higher. There is more stateliness, more sublimity, more tragic passion. Yet the lower hills make pleasant wandering. The *Odyssey* offers us tenderness, domestic reality, and simple beauty. And with these, one finds moments of nobility and intensity of feeling. Nothing in the *Iliad* is more violent than the blinding of Polyphemus, or more rapid, fiery, and tragic than the slaying of the wooers.

The life shown in the poems is far different from our own. It recalls that presented in the Old Testament, the life depicted in Scott's *Ivanhoe*, the life of wild and barbarous people of to-day. And yet it has something we find in none of these, for mingled with the primitive and the barbarous, there is a grace, a beauty—one might say, a loveliness—that the world has lost. Homer makes it live again.

HOMERIC DAYS

Homer tells us of cities, but shows us little of city life. We see nothing of business: the business man of to-day did not exist. There was no money. People traded, and bartered, and did very well without. There was little commerce. The common people found plenty of work. They tilled the fields, tended the cattle, sheep, and swine, tugged at the oar, cut wood, drew water—all the things that somebody must do. The more skilful labored, at least part of the time, at the crafts of smith or carpenter or goldsmith. All men must at need take up arms under their lord.

The man who mattered, of whom the poet tells us most, was the great man—the king, or lord, or chief who lived in the hall or palace. In some ways he was absolute ruler, yet he must always respect the will of his

under lords or counsellors—or his rule might abruptly end. He had great dignity and power and often enormous wealth. His great house was splendidly adorned. It might, of course, have earthen floors, and there might be cooking done on the royal hearth, but the chairs and tables and carved doors and cups were splendid beyond belief. Modern excavations have shown that the treasures of those ancient days were not exaggerated. With the greatest simplicity of life the kings of that day combined the most costly and artistic beauty of decoration. The king's daughter might go to the well for water, but she might carry the water in a vase that would be the treasure of a modern museum.

The king's work was to consult with his lords in council, to deal, as need might arise, with neighbor kingdoms, and, above all, to direct his own estate. Odysseus at Ithaca and Washington at Mount Vernon led very similar lives, keeping a sharp eye upon the ploughing and harvesting, the breeding of cattle and the training of hunting dogs. There was much leisure, yet little idleness—except among such people as the wooers, idle sons of wealthy fathers, young bloods of great pride and small responsibility. A good king, like Alcinoüs or Odysseus, had always occupation.

The position of women was almost as high as it is to-day. Arete is practically mistress in her husband's house. Penelope lays down the law in her hall. Nausicaä asks for a cart, just as a girl to-day would ask for the use of a car, and goes off to the seashore with her servants. There is, however, always the feeling that, when it comes to fighting, women must step aside. Bows and spears are not for them. This came naturally in a time when war was common. Yet in Athene we have, not a woman, but an ideal of womanhood, leading both in arts and arms.

There is a perplexing democracy, almost equalling that of the simpler neighborhoods of early America. Work does not degrade. A princess might go washing, driving a mule-cart, and her "godlike" brothers might come out to carry the clothes in. Kings were dignified, but they did not stand on their dignity. Slaves, in the contemptuous sense of the word, hardly existed. Eumæus is as independent as the hired man on an American farm. The goatherd helps at the feast. It seems to have made little difference in a man's standing if he had been "bought" at the outset. His position rested upon his own merits. What counted above all was character, which in the sense of that day meant fairness and courage and ability to meet any crisis that arose.

War was always possible. There was no settled confidence of peace. There were, in the modern sense, no nations. The world was made up of tiny kingdoms, separated by high mountains and stormy seas. For a common end, such as the attack upon Troy, a number of kingdoms might unite, but for the time only.

Do not think of the Greece of Homer's day as being identical with the Greece of six hundred years later. That age of Pericles and Phidias and Plato was nearer our own, as far from the days of Homer as we are from those of Columbus.

RELIGION

A great difference between us and the Homeric Greeks lies in religion. They believed in many gods. We believe in God, whom we see in all His works. The Greeks saw divine power in all things, too, in mountain and sky and sea, but saw in these not God, but gods and goddesses. At least, however, they saw something higher than man. And before they ate or drank, they

poured reverent libation (a few drops poured out in offering) or offered sacrifice. They were pagans, but pious pagans, and they worshipped sincerely such gods as they knew.

Their gods and goddesses had the weaknesses of man. Perhaps because of this they were very near the heart. Such gods would be quick to sympathize with human errors. And, no matter what his or her feelings, no Greek god or goddess was ever shown as vulgar or debased: each had dignity or beauty—something to lift man above the common level.

Behind all these half-human gods, one feels always the sense of some power that worked, perhaps blindly, for right. Homer speaks of the "will" of Zeus, the "will" of the gods, yet sometimes he speaks simply of "god"—or should we write it "God"?—seeming to mean by it a power that directs the world.

The Greeks had not the modern ideas of sin or repentance or salvation. They knew that if a man over-stepped certain lines of moderation and right living, he must pay the price. See what a price the "haughty wooers" paid for their "proud oppression." And there seems to have been a faint confidence that moderation of life and justice to others might find reward on earth.

The gods lived upon Olympus, a high mountain in northern Greece. Some believed this literally, but to most, Olympus stood for what we call Heaven. It was simply the glorious home of the gods. Snow might cover the actual mountain, but the Olympus of the gods knew neither wind nor rain nor snow. It was a place of golden clouds and gleaming palaces.

To this heaven no mortals were admitted. Immortality—unless one were changed to a god—was a sad, dreary sort of existence, a dim shadow of life, not

much worth living, but a little better than extinction. But even the minor gods were not admitted to Olympus; that was for the aristocracy of the gods, the Olympians.

In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, gods interfere in human affairs. They give advice (usually in disguise or through dreams), they turn spears aside, supply weapons, terrify the enemy, or even fight openly, side by side with the mortals they favor. Yet we of to-day see the hand of Providence in narrow escapes and pray for deliverance in peril or for help in battle. Since the Greeks truly believed in their gods, they believed the gods could help them. Sometimes the idea is symbolic: a god puts a thought into a man's mind. Yet, as a matter of fact, where does the thought come from? Is it just a happening in the man's brain, or does it flash in from something outside and above him? If so, why not say it is from a god—or from God?

Only a few of the gods play an important part in the *Odyssey*. Many more take part in the *Iliad*. The chief of those we see in the *Odyssey*, and the king over all the gods, is Zeus. The Romans called him Jupiter or Jove. He was called the father of the gods, and was literally the father of many of them. He comes nearest to our idea of an omnipotent god. He inherited the throne of heaven from his father, Cronus. His two brothers, Poseidon and Hades, inherited the rule, one of the sea, the other of the world of the dead. Zeus is shown in statues as a stately man of middle age, usually seated. He has a full beard and flowing locks and looks every inch a king. We might say that he was the Greek idealization of the perfect king. In the *Iliad* he shows human weaknesses. In the *Odyssey* he is always dignified and always aiming to enforce justice—a god worthy of the name. He is often spoken of as marshal-

ling the clouds, wielding the thunderbolt, and bearing the ægis, or Gorgon shield.

Poseidon, whom the Romans called Neptune, the god of the sea, might be called the villain of the *Odyssey*, for he pursues its hero with unforgiving hatred. In appearance he was not unlike Zeus. He is usually shown standing, bearing the trident, symbol of his rule over the sea. Sometimes he is shown as driving his four-horse chariot over the waves. Since the sea was supposed to cause earthquakes—the earth was thought to rest upon the sea—he is spoken of as "the shaker of the earth."

A third deity, one very active in the *Odyssey*, is Athene. The Romans knew her as Minerva. Sometimes we find her called Pallas Athene. She personified intelligence, intellectuality. In the *Odyssey* she presents an ideal of what an intellectual woman might be as friend, companion, and adviser. She is a fit protector of Odysseus, the man whose mind is alert in every emergency, able to find a way into Troy or out of the Cyclops' cave.

Athene is shown as a maiden of intellectual beauty, usually in armor, with a spear in her hand. She presides over war, the kind of war in which keenness of mind determines the victory. She is also the goddess of feminine arts—weaving and embroidery. She is an unmarried goddess and, in the occasionally soiled doings of the Olympians, stands always pure and unstained. Her worship should have inspired to perfection of mind and body and to purity of life.

Apollo plays no part in the *Odyssey*, yet he is often called upon, with Zeus and Athene, in earnest prayer, or as a witness to a solemn oath. He is god of light, but not of the sun itself. He is god of song, song being

a sort of light from above, and god of the bow, since the sun's rays dart like arrows. Like the sun, too, he sends sickness and heals it, and can strike with death.

Besides the chief gods, the twelve leading deities that had seats upon Olympus, there were many minor gods and goddesses, and there are many fascinating tales told about most of them. In the *Odyssey* one finds Circe and Calypso and the Sirens. One finds mention of Hercules and Atlas and Iris. And there were innumerable minor gods and goddesses of springs and woods and trees—fauns and nymphs and satyrs. In fact, if you went out of doors in the Greek world, you found a stirring of deities all about you, wherever there was beauty. With regard to other individual gods mentioned in the *Odyssey*, see the list of Important Proper Names, at the end of this volume.

The following books will be helpful to students who wish to learn more about the gods of the Greeks:

The Age of Fable, Bulfinch.

Classic Myths in English Literature, Gayley.

Myths of Greece and Rome, Guerber.

A Book of Myths, J. Lang.

Greek and Roman Mythology, Tatlock.

It is always better to go to a book that gives the whole story than merely to look up a name in a classical dictionary. The latter gives you only dry facts which quickly pass from memory, while such books as those above tell the story with its full human interest, which will make it live for you as it has lived, these many years, for the world at large.

Some get the impression that the Greeks were a cold, hard, intellectual people, aiming gravely at an inhuman culture. That is not at all the kind of people they were. True, they had cold stone statues and dignified

temples, but they adorned both of these with bright colors, and they themselves loved song and dance and gay clothes and sunlight. They were a people of the open air, and they gave us athletics and Olympic games and Marathon races. The word *Greek* is harsh and ugly. The Greeks never used it themselves. They called themselves Hellenes, people of Hellas, and their language is quick and light, soft and graceful.

THE "ODYSSEY" AS A STORY

The *Odyssey* is a great poem. Its greatness lies partly in its beauty of verse. This beauty a translation can only hint. Its greatness lies also in the suggesting and picturing power of its language—something that is also partly lost in translation, but evidence of which remains. Its greatest merit, one that translation cannot diminish, lies in its creative imagination and beauty and nobility of thought. The poem is full of fine passages, so clearly imagined, so convincingly presented, that they will remain with you forever. There is the swooping flight of Hermes, the beautiful garden of Calypso, the hall of Alcinoüs, the cavern of the Cyclops, the mysterious departure from Phæacia by darkness, the passing of the slain wooers down to the land of death. Each of these, and many more, should be dwelt over and studied in all their vivid and beautiful detail.

The *Odyssey* exceeds too in still another quality—the power of the poet to enter heart and soul into the scene he sets before us. There is the meeting of Odysseus and his mother, the dream of Penelope, the dreadful onset of the Læstrygonians, and, the greatest scene of all, the slaying of the wooers in the great hall

of Odysseus. What intensity of human feeling Homer throws into each!

While the *Odyssey* is a great poem, it is also the first great novel. Those who are unable to appreciate its higher merits, its poetry and its beauty, at least enjoy a well-told story. The *Iliad* is an epic poem, the wide, sweeping poetical picture of two peoples at war. But this broad picture seems to dwarf the fortunes of any single person. We are deeply interested in Achilles, in Patroclus, in Hector, in Priam, yet we identify ourselves with the fortunes of no one of these. But in the *Odyssey* the interest is personal. We follow the fortunes of Odysseus. If we accompany Telemachus on his travels, Odysseus is always first in our minds. We follow him and his wife and son through the story just as we follow the characters of a modern novel. And there is an actual picturing of life—not the big impersonal public happenings of a nation, battles where gods contend among men—but human life of human people, life in which we could imagine ourselves and our friends as taking part. There is a plot, too, which moves on steadily, rising to a tremendous climax and ending with peace and good fortune for all those in whose fortunes we are interested. If you think over novels you have read, you will see that the *Odyssey* should stand among the best of them.

Remember, however, that it is also a great poem, and is, though in a different sense from the *Iliad*, an epic—a poem that shows us in noble form a picture of life representative of the beliefs and ideals of a great people. Of course our own life is better; yet that old world of Zeus and Apollo and Athene, of Odysseus and Penelope, can teach us something. It may help us to see what makes life worth living.

THE "ILIAD"

The *Odyssey* is a kind of sequel to the *Iliad*, which tells of one great crisis in the Trojan war. The main story of the war is as follows:

Troy, or Ilium, was a great city in the northwest corner of Asia Minor. (See Map I.) Modern excavations have shown that a rich and important city once stood here. The king of Troy, Priam, had many sons. One of these, Hector, stands out as the noblest character in the *Iliad*. Another of these sons, Paris, is less to be admired. It was he, in fact, who brought on the war.

Three beautiful goddesses—Hera, wife of Zeus; Athene, and Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty —all laid claim to one golden apple. This apple had been inscribed, in order to bring about discord in heaven, "For the most beautiful." It was hard to choose among the three, and most were too cautious to attempt to do so. But finally the goddesses found a judge, the youthful Paris, a shepherd upon Mount Ida, and they asked him to award the prize. Each tried to bribe him. Athene offered him glory; Hera, power and wealth; Aphrodite, the most beautiful woman in the world for his wife. Paris, for he was a very young man, decided promptly in favor of Aphrodite. She kept her promise and helped him to win for his wife Helen, whom we call Helen of Troy, the loveliest of all women.

But Helen was already the wife of Menelaüs, king of Sparta. To become the wife of Paris, she had to leave her husband and run away with her new lover over the sea to Troy. And Priam and Hector and all

the soberer Trojans felt they must stand by Paris and keep Helen from the Greeks who came to win her back.

Of course all the troops of Greece came over to take Helen back to her husband. All the leaders had agreed to this when Menelaüs married her, for he had made all his defeated rivals swear that if any one stole her from him, they would all help him. So now Menelaüs and his brother Agamemnon, who commanded all the united armies, came over with the largest force that could be gathered out of all Greece, and settled down to besiege Troy.

The siege went on for nine years, neither side gaining. Then came the crisis told of in the *Iliad*, the quarrel between Agamemnon and the greatest of Greek warriors, Achilles. Achilles was angry because Agamemnon had taken one of his captives, so angry that he refused to fight under Agamemnon, and shut himself up in his tent, leaving the Greeks to do the best they could without him.

Their best was very bad, for the gods interfered to let the Trojans win, to prove that the Greeks could do nothing without Achilles—whose mother happened to be a minor goddess! The Trojans, with this help, made such surprising gains that, instead of being besieged in their city, they were soon besieging the Greeks and threatening to burn their ships.

In sympathy with Achilles, his dear friend, Patroclus, had remained out of the battle; but now, seeing the desperate case of the Greeks, he borrowed Achilles' armor and went out to save the ships. He drove the Trojans back, partly by the sight of Achilles' armor; but he followed them too far, fought with Hector, and was slain.

Now Achilles forgot his quarrel: he longed only to avenge Patroclus. Yet he had no armor, for Hector had taken it from Patroclus' body. But the goddess mother of Achilles brought him new arms and he entered the battle. He drove the Trojans back to the walls of Troy. Here Hector made a stand against him, but Achilles slew him and dragged his body at his chariot wheels. The poem ends with poor old Priam feebly imploring Achilles to let him take Hector's body back to Troy for burial.

We learn from the *Odyssey* and from other poems that Achilles was afterwards slain by an arrow. The war dragged on. At last shrewd Odysseus thought out a plan. He told the Greeks to build a great wooden horse. In this they hid armed men and sailed off, as if giving up the war, leaving the horse standing in their camp. The Trojans poured out of their city rejoicing. They decided that the horse must be an offering to Athene, and, to win her favor, they dragged it up into Troy and stood it in their citadel.

That night the armed men climbed down and opened the gates to their comrades, who now came sailing back. They plundered the city and left it a blackened ruin. It is because he thought of the horse that Odysseus is spoken of as "taking" or "plundering" Troy.

When Troy was taken, the Greeks sailed away home. They met with various fortunes. Menelaüs lived happily with his beautiful wife. Agamemnon was slain by his wife's lover. As for Odysseus, he had evil fortune indeed, for he was driven far westward by gales, and it was years before he reached his own land. The *Odyssey* tells us of his wanderings and of what he found awaiting him on his return to Ithaca.

THE FORM OF THE "ODYSSEY"

The *Odyssey* is a poem, in metrical form. It is not, however, in the meter used in this translation. The meter used in the original Greek is in long lines of six feet—what is called "dactylic hexameter." This is the meter used by Longfellow in his *Courtship of Miles Standish* and in *Evangeline*, and, much more effectively, by Charles Kingsley in a poem called *Andromeda*. Unfortunately this meter in English has by no means the same effect it has in Greek. Even in Latin, where it is most effective, it has not the lightness and fluidity of the Greek line. In English it runs rather heavily, and lacks variety and speed.

One can get some idea of it from the following translation. Compare it with the translation of the same passage, given on page 101.

So they stood at the gate of the goddess of beautiful tresses;
Sweet they heard then within the voice of Circe, who singing
Walked to and fro by her great and immortal loom, while she wove there
Work as fine and fair and bright as a goddess might fashion.
Then before them all spoke Polites, a leader among them,
He who of all my comrades was dearest, the man I most trusted:
"Friends, now in yonder house, by a mighty loom, one goes walking
Singing a lovely song; all the pavement reëchoes her singing.
Is it a goddess or woman? Nay then, let us call her forth quickly."
So to my men he spoke, and they obeyed him and called her.
Swiftly then came she forth, and, casting the shining doors open,
Bade them enter in, and they in their rashness all followed.

The same form in Greek, where the words are long and made up of smooth, light, quickly uttered syllables, has a very different effect. One might imitate the

metrical effect of the Greek, though inadequately, as follows:

> Rapidly, uninterrupted, it flows on in intricate music.
> Many syllabled song, as light as an oriole's singing,
> Telling its delicate tale of the goddess of beautiful tresses.

Perhaps by putting these together, the student may be able to build up an idea of the character of the poem itself.

The *Odyssey* has certain literary peculiarities. One is the absence of long discussion of thoughts and motives. Only occasionally does any one stop to ponder. If he does, his ponderings are usually short and to the point, and are given in direct quotation, not explained from outside by the author. The descriptive passages are usually short and clear cut. The only really long description, that of the garden of Alcinoüs, is largely, most think, a late addition. Compare the average modern novel and see how much more a modern novelist brings in, both in character analysis and description. Of course the narrative moves most swiftly when Odysseus is telling his adventures to Alcinoüs.

Homer almost always uses direct discourse. He gives us the actual words of each speaker. This makes the story more real, and more readable.

Homer uses many epithets,—not ordinary descriptive adjectives, like *tall* or *red-haired,* but words used to decorate or for incidental suggestion. It is not important to the story that the ships should always be *black* or *hollow* or *good* or *red-bowed,*—yet the word *ship* is seldom used without an adjective of this sort accompanying it. Odysseus is *shrewd* or *wise* or *ready* or *long-tried,* even when these qualities are not important in the story. Athene is almost invariably *keen-eyed.*

In many cases these epithets have been shortened or simplified, or even omitted in translation, for the reason that in English they thrust themselves forward much more emphatically than in the Greek, where they seem almost like an extension of the name. Homer himself seems to use whichever one best fits the meter when a space is to be filled, and to omit the use of them when the line would be over-crowded. Enough have been kept to show the general character.

Homer's similes are characteristic of his poems, though they are far less striking in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*. Often a simile not only brings out the resemblance intended, but goes on with vivid details that develop the picture apparently for its own sake. See, for instance, the similes on pages 16 and 17.

As in the Old Testament, we find in Homer much repetition. In the *Iliad*, for instance, a god sends a dream to stand by a man's bed and give him a message. We hear the whole message. Then we are told how the dream delivered it, and we hear the whole again. Then the man arises and repeats the message to his friend, and we hear it all a third time. When the poems were originally recited, this must have given the audience the pleasure that a child gets from the repetitions in a fairy-story. In the *Odyssey*, while the repetitions are fewer, there are several. Occasionally here a repetition has been omitted, to reduce the bulk of this book, and the omission has been indicated.

The story of the *Odyssey* as a whole falls into two parts. One cannot, however, draw a dividing line through the middle of the poem. The division is too complex for that.

We might say that Part I, the Travels of Odysseus, includes Books V, VI, IX, X, XI, XII. (Books VII and VIII, while belonging with this in subject matter,

are rather in the manner of the other part.) This part of the narrative is told rapidly, one might say mythically, with little realism. Books IX, X, XI, and XII, in which Odysseus tells the tale to king Alcinoüs, are especially rapid and impatient of detail. The stay with the Phæacians is told with more detail, though far less realistic than such books as XVIII or XIX.

In Books I and II, and from Book XIII to the end we have a story with the realism of a versified novel. Characters are fully depicted, conversations are quoted at length, motives are developed, and the situations are led, through many steps, to a climax. (Books III and IV have something of this character, though developing a theme of their own.)

The *Outline of the Action*, given in the Appendix, is not by books but by the leading characters, Odysseus, Penelope, and Telemachus, with page references for the more important events in the story of each. This makes it easy to find a given adventure or to review any desired part of the story. Under *Important Proper Names* there will be found, besides, page references for other characters.

PRONUNCIATION

Under *Important Proper Names* will be found all the more important names that call for explanation, each followed by a clear indication of its proper pronunciation with diacritical marks. Names not found there appear in another list following the first.

Please observe the following points:

In names from the Greek, *ch* is pronounced like *k*.

In most Homeric names ending in *aus* and *ous*, the two vowels are pronounced separately, as in Alcíno-üs, Antíno-üs, Menelá-üs, etc. The diæresis (oüs) is used

to indicate this. The same is true of the very troublesome name Nausicaä, Nau-sík-a-a. (Teachers will do well to call special attention to this.)

In most words ending in *eus*, as in *Zeus* and *Odysseus*, the *eu* is a diphthong, pronounced like the word *you*. In a few words, however, the *e* and the *u* are separate syllables, with the accent on the *e*. Be sure to find out which these are.

In the word *wing'd*, the *e* is omitted for the reason that there seems to have grown up a tradition that the word must be pronounced wingèd, in two syllables. As that pronunciation is not in accord with the spirit of this translation, it is to be avoided. The use of apostrophe in this case does not indicate that the *ed* is to be pronounced in other cases. In fact it is to be pronounced only in *aged* and possibly in *beloved*, used as a past participle.

METER

In reading the verse, try to bring out the movement of the meter, making a very slight pause at the end of each line where the sense runs over into the line following. The verse should not be read like prose without indication of the line form. On the other hand, one should avoid sing-song reading. Try to do justice both to the meter and the thought.

The meter used is four-foot iambic—much the same as that employed by Scott in *The Lady of the Lake*. In this case, however, there is no rhyme, there is frequent use of the feminine ending (an extra syllable at the end of the line) and the pauses often fall in the body of the line. While this form is novel, it is simple and should read easily. Occasionally, as in most iambic verse, a line begins with an accented syllable, and, espe-

cially in the case of long proper names, there is now and then a need for slurring or hurrying syllables.

THE WORLD OF HOMER'S DAY

The Greeks of Homer's day knew little about the western part of "the sea," which was their name for the Mediterranean. Seamen of that day must have been tolerably familiar with the coast from Ithaca all the way round to Troy and even down round Asia Minor. Some must have made voyages to Cyprus and Tyre and Sidon, even to Egypt. But there seem to have been no maps of any accuracy, and there were great gaps in men's knowledge.

Men knew something about northern Africa and a little about Sicily. But to most men of Homer's early day, the western part of the Mediterranean was a blank space where there might be anything—the sort of space that map-makers used to mark *Unexplored*.

Writers of later days have followed, or tried to follow, the travels of Odysseus. It is of little use to attempt to work them out on any map of the present day. Homer had not the least idea of such a map. Most of the locations assigned to Homer's story by later writers fail to fit. Scheria, the land of the Phæacians, cannot be Corfu, for that would have been practically in sight of Odysseus' own mountain tops. The Island of Circe on the coast of Italy is not, and never was, surrounded by a "circle of blue sea."

Consequently Map II, showing Odysseus' wanderings, pays no attention to the precise place where land is to be found on a modern map. The line indicating Odysseus' course follows the direction a sailor would take if he were blown off far west of Malta and were trying to work back against unfavorable winds towards

Greece. He would generally steer eastward, except when driven back by storms or turned aside by masses of land. One can tell roughly how long he sailed on each course by the number of days Homer says that he spent sailing. This is such a map as Odysseus might have drawn on the sand to explain his wanderings to a friendly Phæacian. It shows only land he would actually have seen. As for places where his ship did not touch, he would either leave his map blank or would give only a vague blurry hint, such as chart-makers use to-day when dealing with uncharted corners.

After studying the wanderings shown on this map, it would be interesting to try to find out what places a man who went where Odysseus thought he went, would actually have reached. Remember, however, that the early traveller with no compass and little astronomy, had vague notions of direction. Even good navigators, when they find a new country, have a hard time mapping it correctly. Look at the early maps of the American continent!

The really important thing is not to know what real places an imaginary Odysseus may have reached on an imagined journey, but to do our best to make these imaginary adventures as real to us as they were to him. Map II may do this if you follow it with a maximum regard to imagination and a total indifference to latitude and longitude.

The Phæacians seem to be made-up people who lived off on the other side of nowhere, far away from Ithaca, yet not too far from a straight course laid toward Ithaca from Calypso's island. The northern coast of Africa, where there may have been maritime nations of Phœnician origin, seems as likely as any place. And it would account, perhaps, for the name Phæacians. Any reader who does not like this, may move them anywhere he

likes! But do not forget that Alcinoüs was kingly, Nausicaä beautiful, and the ships the finest that ever sped across the great wine-dark gulf of the sea.

Map I shows the known world of Homer's time, the world in which he travelled. And what a tiny world it was, surrounded by the Ocean-Stream from which the sun somehow rose and into which he no less mysteriously went down, while nobody had the least notion how he ever got back into the east again. How different from our great globe surrounded by starry space. But, after all, the things we do not know about what lies around us are almost as many as the things Homer's Greeks did not know. Life is still surrounded with mystery, whether of the sea west of Malta or of the space beyond the farthest star.

TO THE TEACHER

The *Odyssey* should be taught both as a story and as a poem. As a story, it should be dealt with like any imaginative novel—*Ivanhoe, Kipnapped,* or *Lorna Doone.* The important thing is not for the student to memorize what happened, as he might in the study of history, but to let his imagination freely create the scenes that the writer sets before him. He should not, for instance, learn the details of the Cyclops' cave, of his dairying, or of his conduct toward guests. He should give himself over into Homer's hands and follow the frightful experiences of Odysseus. If he does this, he can never forget, even if he would, any feature of that glorious nightmare.

Do not have the student work out laboriously the plan of Alcinoüs's garden or of a Homeric hall or of the geography of Scheria. If the reader studies these at all, it should be because he is so interested in the story that he *must* work them out. The same applies to outlines of the action and similar devices. The story is to be regarded not as an experiment station for profitable pedagogical assignments, but as an opportunity for human interest. The teacher's attitude should be that of the conductor of a sight-seeing party. He should take care, as he conducts his charges through this magic land, that they miss no point of interest; he must indicate, emphasize, interpret and arouse attention. He must never forget that his chief function is to make every one in his party realize that Homer is human, interesting, enjoyable.

Part of a teacher's work is to remove obstacles. The modern student is troubled about gods and goddesses,

about unfamiliar customs, about puzzling differences in the whole feel and character of the life depicted. The remedy is not formal instruction in a whole text-book of mythology. It is rather to lead students to understand the attitude of the Greeks toward their gods and then gradually to introduce these, one by one, as the story requires. And they must be made human, as they readily can. Athene and Poseidon can be made as real to a high-school student as the teachers he meets daily. Avoid the impression that the book is a collection of mythological names to be looked up. If students are referred to the mythology, let them be sent there for specific stories of human interest. The story must not be buried under dry information. Students who are interested in the book will learn archæology without realizing it. The writer has known high-school boys of thirteen who fought animated and perilous battles with barrel-head shields and bean-pole spears—most convincingly hurled, too—not because any teacher so ordered, but because they felt that a Homeric fight must have been rather good sport, and wanted to try it.

Do not stress the main lines of the story at the expense of the significant detail. A student may summarize Odysseus' visit to the Lotus-eaters and yet leave out everything that makes the story worth telling. The important thing is not that these particular people ate lotus or gave it to others or that it made men indolent and forgetful—it is the "feel" with which Homer tells it, the detail that makes you realize, as you read it, that you too would like to lie back under a palm-tree by blue waters, and eat lotus, forever. A teacher who leaves out such detail as this is like the servant who cut off the heads of the asparagus. Make sure that the student eats the right part of this food we are serving him—the tender edges of the artichoke, the red grains

of the pomegranate. In Homer, as in most great literature, the detail *is* the story. Let the student have the tale as Homer wrote it, with all its flavor, all its vitamins in it.

Of course a student needs help in grasping the main lines of action and character. But these should not be taught formally as *climax, obstacle* and other bugbears of the young victim of education. Whatever is worth while in these can be brought out without such technical terms. One can ask naturally, in ordinary words, how some particular touch helps to build up an effect, how some delay enhances the suspense. One can ask, too, just what certain acts and words tell about the character of some man or woman. Our students are always studying character from acts and speeches—the character of their schoolmates or of their teachers. Help them to see that one studies character in books in the same way. As to direction of action, one can ask, "What does this lead you to expect?" "Why does this make you feel uneasy?" and similar questions that treat the experience as real.

The *Odyssey* is a poem as well as a story. As a poem, it should be read aloud and appreciated in its full form. Eye-reading may do for prose: it is not suited to poetry. Poetry is a thing for the ear, a kind of writing where skimming and skipping have no place. Since the student cannot, unhappily, read the poem as Homer wrote it, get all you can from the translation. Let the student read it aloud, or read it aloud yourself and bring out all the implications of sound and word-suggestion. Get not merely the idea, the thing said, but with this, its color, its spirit, its over-tone—the *quality* of the poem.

Do not treat figures of speech formally. One can bring out every valuable fact about them without a

word of formal study. Do not, like the Alexandrians, make Homer a text-book of rhetoric. If Homer uses a figure of speech, he uses it to make his story more effective. When Odysseus appears before Nausicaä and her frightened maidens, Homer compares him to a lion. Why? Simply because, as he saw Odysseus, he saw the picture of the lion too, advancing as alarmingly, as resolutely; and he tells us what he saw. He saw the lion so vividly, and was so carried away by the sight that he tells us more about him than is really needed to make us see Odysseus. So, when we think of that passage, we get two pictures, one of Odysseus striding resolutely forward, the other of the lion from the mountains "rain-wet and wind-beaten," advancing upon the cowering cattle. Do not use a noble passage like this, that was meant to help us to see Odysseus and the lion, to impress the dry definition of a simile.

One does not bring out the vital beauty of any work of art by making abstractions and classifications. Such work does not lead to lively appreciation; in fact it leads in the opposite direction. The chemist who analyzes a delicious food is, for all his analysis, no better able to share or understand the delight of the epicure who tastes each morsel slowly and appreciatively.

In dealing with the *Odyssey* as a whole, remember that this story differs in no essential from such a modern adventure story as Zane Grey's *To the Last Man*. The *Odyssey* is a far better story, far better told, with greater climax and stronger characterization. Yet, as the lion is but a glorified cat, this book is but a nobler relative of the novels that our students read and like. Approach the book in the right spirit and hold fast, throughout the work of study, to the spirit of this approach—that this is a great story, to be read in the

same spirit and with the same enjoyment with which young people read the novels of to-day. Make your students feel, not that this book has been dead three thousand years, but that it has *lived* three thousand years and that it still lives.

SPECIFIC TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Teachers should be sure to make use of the lists of proper names at the end of the book. It is easy to mispronounce these names, and if a class once learns a name in the wrong way, change is difficult. Beware, for instance, of such names as Nausicaä, Æolus, and Elpenor.

The verse should be read as verse. At the end of those lines where neither thought nor punctuation requires a distinct pause, a reader should pause slightly without dropping the voice, making rather a hesitation than a distinct pause, but indicating the rhythmic division. Of course, there should be no sing-song delivery. The right way to read verse is to keep in mind both the type of line used and the variations, if any, found in any individual line.

The meter of the poem is four-foot iambic. The regular, typical line would be, for instance:

/ / / /
And so the great Odysseus rose

Many lines add a syllable (feminine ending):

/ / / /
And so the great Odysseus hastened

Sometimes the opening syllable takes the accent from the second syllable (as often happens in music) resulting in such a line as:

/ / / /
Quickly the great Odysseus rose

Occasionally such a shift of accent will be found in some other part of the line:

And so with a great spear in hand

Now and then an extra syllable, to be passed over hurriedly, will be inserted in the body of the line:

And so with hurry ing steps he strode

All the reader needs to do is to keep the general form of the line in mind and to read each individual line with whatever slight variation may prove necessary.

Original compositions by the students add to the interest. Some teachers obtain good results by calling for additional adventures of Odysseus and his men. Others prefer to have his adventures retold from new points of view. Polyphemus tells about Odysseus' visit, Telemachus gives his story of the battle in the hall, Penelope tells about her meeting with Odysseus, Circe tells of encountering the man her spells would not enchant.

Map II offers one means of review through a live and interested discussion of perplexed points. It would be well, however, to caution students against what will be found in many books—the absolute identification of the places mentioned in the *Odyssey* with specific places in modern Italy, Sicily, Greece, etc. There is neither literary nor archæological ground for such identification. Such books are valuable, however, if used properly, to give an idea of Mediterranean coast scenery, which is radically different from anything found on the American coast.

It will help students to visit a city art museum, in order to study statues of gods and goddesses and Homeric warriors. Care should be taken, however, to make such a visit interesting.

For wider reading, Bryant's translation of the *Iliad* is recommended. Pope's translation may be more readable for some, but students should be warned that it misses the spirit of Homer. Brooks' *Story of the Iliad* is excellent for a prose rewriting, keeping the action of the story with much of its spirit.

THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER

CIMMERIANS
LAND OF THE
DEAD
THE OCEAN STREAM
Return
Circe
Here he remains one year
He follows Circe's directions
To Land of dead
He sails on with one ship
THE SIRENS
THE CLASHING ROCKS
SCYLLA
CHARYBDIS
Land of the Sun
Here they slay the cattle
They destroy all his ships but one
Land turns him from his eastward course
He drifts back to Charybdis
Here Zeus smites his ship with a bright bolt
Here his men untie the sack of winds
He drifts nine days on mast and keel
He sails nine days with fair winds given by Æolus
He is driven back to Æolia by angry winds
Here he remains seven years
Circe (Ogygia)
Æolus (Æolia)
THE GREAT GULF OF THE SEA
He steers homeward
He sails seventeen days eastward on his slow raft
Point Maleia
Cave
Cyclops
Island of Goats
Here Poseidon wrecks his raft
He steers homeward
He is driven westward into unknown seas by great gales from the north and east
He swims to land
A magic Phaeacian ship bears him home in a single night
Mouth of river
City and Port
(Scheria)

MAP II—THE WANDERINGS OF ODYSSEUS: THE UNKNOWN WORLD

THE ODYSSEY

BOOK ONE

TELL ME THE TALE, MUSE, OF THAT MAN
OF MANY CHANGES, HE WHO WENT
WANDERING SO FAR WHEN HE HAD
PLUNDERED
Troy's sacred citadel. And many
The men whose cities he beheld,
Whose minds he learned to know, and many
The sorrows that his soul endured
Upon the deep the while he strove
To save himself from death and bring
His comrades home.
Of these things now,
Daughter of Zeus, O goddess, tell us,
Even as thou wilt, the tale.
Ere this
Those others who escaped death's stroke
Had reached their homes at last, delivered
From battle and the sea. But him
And him alone—though still he longed
For home and wife—the nymph Calypso,
A mighty goddess, kept imprisoned
Within her hollow caves, and longed
To make him there her husband. No,
Not when the day came when the gods
Granted, as circling seasons passed,
That he might once again return
To Ithaca—not even then,

With those that loved him, might he find
A rest from strife. And all the gods
Felt pity for him, all but one—
Poseidon. Still, with wrath unceasing,
He strove against the good Odysseus
Until he reached his home.

But now
This god was gone afar to visit
The Ethiopians, and there
He shared the offering they made him
Of bulls and rams, and at their feast
Sat with delight.

And now there came
The other gods all gathering
In Zeus the Olympian's hall. And thus
Spoke out before them then the father
Of gods and men:

"Alas that mortals
Should blame the gods! From us, they say,
All evils come. Yet they themselves
It is who through defiant deeds
Bring sorrow on them—far more sorrow
Than fate would have them bear. Behold
Ægisthus, he who overpassed
Fate's measure, for he took the wife
Of Atreus' son to be his own
And slew him coming home. And yet
He might have seen swift ruin coming
For we ourself gave warning. Now
He pays the price for all."

Then spoke
Athene, flashing-eyed, and answered:
"Our father, mighty son of Cronus,
Highest of all who rule—that man
Lies justly smitten. Even so

Die all that do such deeds. And yet
My heart is torn for wise Odysseus.
Hard is his fate. Far from his friends
He sits in sorrow on an island
Washed round with waters, the lone navel
Of the unending sea, an island
Thick wooded, where there dwells a goddess,
Daughter of evil-minded Atlas,
Who knows the soundings of all seas,
Who only holds the mighty pillars
That sunder earth and heaven. And she,
Daughter of Atlas, keeps this man
Weeping and sad at heart and strives
With soft and pleading words to win him
To think no more of home. Yet he
Is ever longing but to see
Once more the smoke that rises up
Over his native land, and so
Die happy seeing it. And yet,
Lord of Olympus, not a touch
Of pity stirs your heart!"
And Zeus,
Who guides the clouds, thus answered:
"Child,
What word is this you have let pass
The portal of your teeth? Nay, how
Could I by any chance forget
The great Odysseus, who excels
All men in wisdom and in gifts
At altars of the undying gods
Who dwell in spacious heaven?
Yet ever
That god whose waters gird the earth,
Poseidon, bears unceasing anger
Against him, for the Cyclops' sake,

The godlike Polyphemus, whom
Odysseus blinded. And Poseidon
Has ever since that blinding, driven
Odysseus, though he may not slay him,
Far wandering from his home. But come,
And let us all in council shape
A plan for his return. Poseidon
Shall lay his wrath aside: he cannot
Contend alone against the power
Of all the gods."

Then spoke in answer
Athene, flashing-eyed, and said:
"O Father, son of Cronus, highest
Of all that rule—if this seem good
To all the blessed gods, that now
The wise Odysseus shall return
To his own home, then let us send
Hermes, the herald swift as light,
To the Ogygian isle.

There quickly
He shall speak forth to that fair nymph
Our will unalterable, that now
Odysseus, who so long has suffered,
Shall go his way and reach his home." . . .*

* Books Two, Three and Four have been omitted in this translation to maintain the continuity of the story. See Appendix, Omitted Passages.

BOOK FIVE

SO SAID SHE, AND THEN THUS SPOKE ZEUS
TO HERMES, HIS OWN SON, AND SAID,
"HERMES, FOR EVER IN ALL THINGS
You bear our word abroad; go now
And tell that nymph of the fair tresses
Our word unalterable; that now
Odysseus, who so long has suffered
Shall go his way, and he shall see
His dear ones, and his high-roofed home,
And his own native land."
So spoke he.
His herald, swift as light, failed not
To heed his father's word. And first
He bound beneath his feet his sandals,
Lovely, imperishable, golden,
That lightly bear him o'er the waters
And o'er the boundless earth, as swiftly
As the wind's breath. And then he took
The wand wherewith he charms and closes
The eyes of whom he will, or wakes them
Once more from sleep. So, holding this
Fast in his hand, away went speeding
Swift as the light, that mighty god.
But when Pieria lay behind,
Then down he swooped from the high heaven—
Down to the deep, and sped along
Over the waters as a bird
Goes fleeting, as a cormorant
That, sweeping down the dreadful hollows

Of the unresting deep, pursues
His prey, the fish, and dips his plumage,
Thick-feathered, in salt sea.
Like him
Skimming those waves innumerable,
Sped Hermes on his way.
And now
At last, he reached that far-off island,
And turned him from the dark-blue waters
And inland trod, until he came
To the great cavern wherein dwelt
That fair-tressed goddess.
Here within
He found her. On the hearth was blazing
A mighty fire, and far away
Through all the isle was borne the fragrance
Of sandalwood and cloven cedar
That burned there. And the nymph within
Was singing, and her voice was sweet
As up and down before her loom
She walked, and plied her golden shuttle.
And round about that cave there flourished
A grove thick-growing, all of alder
And poplar, and sweet-scented cypress;
And here for rest came birds far-winging—
Owls, falcons, and far-clamoring sea-gulls
That ply their tasks at sea.
And here,
About that hollow cave, went running
A vine all riotous and rich
With clustered grapes. And there were springs,
Four, in a row, all pouring forth
Their crystal waters, side by side,
Yet each went its own way. Around,
On every hand, spread tender meadows,

Where parsley bloomed, and violet.
There even a deathless god, should ever
A god come thither, might stand gazing
In joy and wonder. So now stood
Gazing, the herald of the gods,
Swift as the light.
And when his heart
Had had its fill, he turned and entered
That spacious cavern. And Calypso
Failed not, when she beheld his face,
To know who it must be. The gods,
The immortal ones, are not unknown
To one another, though their dwellings
Be far asunder.
And she asked:
"For what end are you come, great Hermes;
God of the golden wand? This never
Has been your wont. Speak out the purpose
That lies within your mind. My heart
Bids me obey, if what you ask me
Be in my power."
Then thus replied
The messenger of Zeus:
"You ask me, goddess,
A god, why I am come, and I
Will answer truly. Zeus has sent me
Against my will, for who would cross,
Of his own wish, such dreary wastes
Of the salt sea! With you, he says,
There dwells a man, the most unhappy
Of all those men who for nine years
Made war round Priam's town. This man
He bids you send away, and quickly,
For it is this man's fate to see

His friends once more, to come again
To his own native land."
Then shuddering,
Calypso answered:
"Ah, you gods
Are ever envious! What horror
Fills you should any goddess venture
To mate with mortal man! So now
You gods are horrified that I
Should keep this mortal here! Yet I
It was who saved the man, when Zeus
Had shattered his swift ship, far out
Upon the wine-dark sea. But since
No god may cross or set aside
The will of Zeus who bears the ægis—
Let the man go! since Zeus decrees it,
And gives command. Let him go forth
Over the restless sea. I have
No ships or men, but I will help him
With counsel; nor will I refuse
To tell him how he yet, unharmed,
May reach his native land."
Then spoke
The Herald, swift as light:
"Even so,
Help thou this man's return. Beware
The wrath of Zeus."
So spoke the god,
The Herald swift as light, and thence
He went his way. And now the nymph
Sought great Odysseus.
And she found him
Sitting upon the shore, and tears
Flowed ceaseless from his eyes. Sweet life
Was wasting from him as he sorrowed

For his own home. And now the nymph
Stood by him, and she said:
"I pray you,
Unhappy man, now weep no more!
Waste not your life away in weeping.
For I will help you, with good will,
To reach your home. Take now your axe
And hew long timbers and then join them
And build yourself a broad-beamed raft.
And I will give you food and raiment
And a fair wind, that you may come
Unharmed to your own land. For so
The gods would have it. They are stronger
Than I, and have their will." *
So said she,
And so she sent him forth to sea
Upon a well-lashed raft, and stores
She gave in plenty—wine and bread.
And in immortal robes she clad him
And sent a soft and favoring wind
To help him on his way. Seven days
And ten he sailed across the deep.
And on the eighteenth day there rose
Far off the misted mountain peaks
Of the Phæacian land, and glad
His heart was then. Unhappy man!
For he was yet to bear the great
And bitter grief that now Poseidon,
Who shakes the earth, sent forth against him.
For he aroused the winds and set them
To bar his way, and mighty billows,
For all his groans, would now no longer

* The passage from this point to the end of Book V appears in the original in Book VII. It is included here for the sake of continuity with no alteration other than the change from first to third person.

Leave him upon his raft; for this
The storm soon dashed asunder. Then
Swimming he battled through the waters
Till wind and sea drove him at last
To the Phæacian land. Yet here,
As he would leave the sea and climb
Upon the shore, the rolling breakers
Brought him near death, for they would dash him
Against huge rocks, in places where
There seemed no hope. Yet, turning thence,
Onward he ever swam, and came
At last upon a stream, a place
Such as he sought, all clear of rocks,
Well sheltered from the wind. So here
He struggled forth and fell and lay
Summoning strength, and therewith came
Night, gift of heaven. So he went,
Leaving that god-sent stream, and laid him
To sleep within the thicket, heaping
The leaves about him, and the gods
Poured on him deep, unbroken slumber.

BOOK SIX

SO HERE ODYSSEUS NOW LAY SLEEPING—
GODLIKE, LONG SUFFERING, WEIGHED DOWN
WITH WEARINESS AND NEED OF SLUMBER.
Meanwhile Athene went her way
To the Phæacian land and city. . . .
And here now ruled Alcinoüs
With wisdom sent from heaven. And hither
Athene came, the keen-eyed goddess,
Still planning in her heart to bring
High-souled Odysseus home.
She entered
A chamber wondrously adorned
With craftsman's art, and there within,
A maiden with a form and face
Like the immortal gods, lay sleeping—
The maid Nausicaä, the daughter
Of noble-souled Alcinoüs;
And near her, by the doorposts twain,
In beauty that the Graces gave them,
Slept her two handmaids, and shut closely
Stood the bright doors.
Then softly passing
As breathes the wind, the goddess went
To the maid's couch, and stood beside her
At the bed's head, and thus she spoke;
But to the eye she seemed the daughter
Of Dymas famed for ships, a maid
Just of her age, her dear companion.

In this maid's shape, thus spoke the goddess
Keen-eyed Athene:
"How, I wonder,
Nausicaä, could your good mother
Have such a heedless child! For now
Your shining clothes lie all uncared for,
Yet ever nearer draws the day
When you must take a husband. Then
You need fine clothes to wear, and you
Must give the like to those who come
To lead you forth. From things like this
Often a good report arises
And spreads through all the land, and pleases
Your father and good mother.
Come,
Let us go forth at break of day
And do the washing. And I too
Will join your number, that you soon
May have all ready. For you cannot
Remain now very long unmarried:
The best men of the land ere this
Are come to woo you. So, now, quickly
Go you, at dawn, to your good father
And ask to have a cart made ready
Harnessed with mules, in which to carry
The robes and rugs and shining garments;
For this befits you better far
Than walking out afoot: the pools
We use for washing lie far off
Outside the city."
With such words
The keen-eyed goddess spoke and went
Her way to high Olympus. There
Men tell us the immortal gods

Have their fixed dwelling-place, which ever
Abides unchanging. Never wind
Comes there to vex, nor is it wet
With any rain, nor ever snow
Comes thither, but clear air and cloudless
Spreads round it, and above it plays
A white pure splendor. Here the gods
Live happy all their days, in bliss
That knows no ending.

Thither passed
The keen-eyed goddess when the maiden
Had heard her counsel.

And now dawn
Came, on her shining throne, and now
Nausicaä awaked. And much
She marvelled at her dream, and quickly
She hastened through the house to tell
Her parents of it—her dear father
And mother, too.

There in the hall
She found them both: her mother sat
Close by the hearth amidst her women,
Spinning sea-purple wool; her father
She found just by the door, bound forth
To meet his mighty lords in council; . . .
And there to him the maiden came,
And standing close beside him, said
To her dear father:

"Won't you please,
Dear papa, have them make me ready
The great high cart with fine new wheels
So I can carry to the river
All my bright garments, for they now
Are lying soiled. You too, yourself,

When you are planning mighty plans
Among your lords—you too will need
Fresh clothes to wear. And you have sons—
Five sons at home—and two are married,
But three are still unwed and full
Of youth and spirit. They must always
Have fine fresh clothing when they go
To join the dancers. Things like this
Fall rightly to my care!"

So said she,
Ashamed to speak of love and marriage
To her dear father. But he read
The thought within her heart and answered:
"My child, I'll not deny the mules
Nor anything you wish. So come—
The servants shall at once make ready
Our high cart with the fine new wheels,
And fit the rack on top."

So said he,
And therewith called his servants forth
And they obeyed him. In the courtyard
They took the mule-cart with strong wheels
And made it ready, and they brought
The mules and yoked them to the cart.
Then from her room the maiden brought
All her fine clothing, placing it
In the bright-polished cart. Her mother
Then filled a box with dainty food
Of every kind, and pleasant morsels,
And poured a goatskin bag of wine
For her to carry. Then the maiden
Mounted the cart. Her mother gave her
A vase of olive oil, wherewith
She and her maidens might anoint them
After the bath.

And then the maiden
Took whip and reins in hand, and sharply
She swung the whip. Off went the mules
With clattering on their way, and strained
With all their might, and bore away
The clothing and the maid; and yet
She did not go alone, for by her
There walked her maidens.

And at last
They reached the place where flowed the current
Of that fair stream, for here stood pools
Forever full, and ever here
There welled up and flowed forth clear water—
Enough to cleanse the foulest stain.
Here they unyoked the mules and loosed them
And drove them off to stray beside
The eddies of the stream, and crop
The clover honey-sweet.

They took, then,
The clothing from the cart and bore it
Down in their arms to the dark water,
And there they trod it under, deep
Into the pools, the maids contending
Which should be swiftest. And when all
Was washed and each stain cleansed, they laid it
Spread heedfully along the beach,
Just where the waves that dashed to shore
Washed the round pebbles clean. And here
They bathed them and anointed them
With shining oil, and ate their meal
Beside the river's brim, and waited
Until the bright rays of the sun
Should dry the clothing.

Now with hearts
Made glad by the good food, they all—
Mistress and maids—began to play
At ball together, casting from them
Their flowing scarves. They tossed the ball
To music and they followed ever
White-armed Nausicaä. As goes
The arrowed goddess Artemis
Down mountain slopes, on lofty ridges,
Taÿgetus or Erymanthus.
And ever chases with delight
The boar or the swift stag, while round her
Sport all her woodland nymphs, the daughters
Of ægis-bearing Zeus—while Leto
Is glad at heart to see her child,
Taller than all by head and brow,
Surpassing all the maids about her,
Though all are fair—even so this maid
Surpassed her maidens.
Now her mind
Turned to the task of going home—
Yoking the mules and gathering
The clothes together. And the goddess,
Keen-eyed Athene, now thought out
Another plan—to let Odysseus
Awake and see the fair-eyed maiden,
And she should guide him to the city
Of the Phæacians.
So it came
That as the princess tossed the ball
Towards a maid, it missed its mark
And fell into the stream's deep eddy.
All screamed out loudly. Then awakened
Godlike Odysseus, and he sat
Musing in mind and soul:

"Alas!
What men are these whose land I now
Am come to? Are they fierce and cruel,
Unheeding justice, or good friends
To every stranger, with just minds
That reverence God? I heard about me
A clear shrill cry, the voice of maidens.
What! Can it be I am near men
Of mortal speech! But come, for I
Must venture forth and see!"

So speaking,
Noble Odysseus crept from under
The thicket where he lay, and broke
With mighty hands a leafy branch
From the close growth to hold before him
And hide his naked body. Forth
He came then, even as a lion,
Bred in the mountains, comes: his trust
Is in his strength: he goes his way,
Rain-wet, wind-buffeted; his eyes
Glow fire. Now he goes to prey
On sheep or cattle; now he chases
The woodland deer; or, hunger-driven,
He ventures among flocks and enters
The close-barred fold. And even as he,
Odysseus, naked though he was,
Came boldly toward those fair-haired maidens,
For need compelled him. Terrible
He seemed there in their eyes, his skin
Crusted and foul with brine. They fled
Scattered before him, all along
The sandbars toward the sea.

But one,
And one alone remained, the daughter
Of great Alcinoüs. Athene

Gave courage to her heart and freed
Her knees from fear. Firmly she stood
And faced him.
And Odysseus mused
If it were better there to kneel
And clasp the fair-eyed maiden's knees *
Beseeching her, or stand afar,
Even where he stood, and thence implore her
With gentle words. And as he pondered
This way seemed best:—to stand afar
And plead with gentle words, for fear
Lest, should he touch the maiden's knees
She might be moved to anger. So
Straightway he spoke to her and said
In wise and gentle words:
"I stand
A suppliant to you, mighty one.
Are you a goddess or a mortal?
If you are of the gods who dwell
In the wide heavens, you are like,
As I behold you, Artemis,
The daughter of great Zeus—like her
In beauty, height and bearing. Yet,
If you be mortal and your dwelling
Be here on earth, then blest indeed
Your father is and your good mother,
And thrice blest are your brothers. Surely
Their souls must glow with joy to see you
Moving to join the dance, so fair
A blossom from their stem. Most happy
Above all others he shall be
Who wins you with his gifts and leads you

* The "suppliant," asking protection from a stranger, was supposed to kneel, place one hand behind the knee of the one to whom he sued, and raise the other hand in petition.

To his own home. My eyes have never
Looked on your like among mankind—
On man or woman! As I gaze,
Awe comes upon me. Only once
Have I beheld your like—a palm-tree
In Delos, springing young and slender
Beside Apollo's altar. Aye,
Even so, in gazing at that palm-tree
I marvelled in my heart, for never
Has soared up from the earth a stem
Stately as that. Even so, O lady,
I wonder and am awed, and fear,
And dare not touch your knees!
And yet
Bitter the evils that afflict me.
But yesterday, the twentieth day,
Saved from the wide sea's wine-dark waters,
I came to land alive, for ever
Until that hour the rolling waves
And hurrying tempests drove me hither
From the Ogygian isle. And now
Some power above has cast me here,
That even here I may endure
More suffering still. For well I know
This shall not end yet. Ere it does,
The gods shall surely bring to pass
Full many an evil.
So, O lady,
Have pity! For you are the first
I make petition to, sore spent
With many sufferings. Save you,
I know not one of those who dwell
Here in this land and city. Show me
Where lies the town, and give me, pray,

Some rag for covering—the cloth
You brought with you to wrap the clothing.
So may the gods bestow on you
The gift your heart desires most—
A husband and a home, and in it
True harmony of mind, for nothing
Better or nobler can there be
Than when within one home there dwell
Two in true union, man and wife—
Great grief this brings their enemies—
Joy to their friends! Its true delight
None ever know but they."
Then answered
White-armed Nausicaä:
"You do not
Seem like a bad man, stranger—nay,
Nor dull of wit. But Zeus who dwells
Upon Olympus—he alone
Gives happiness to men—to each,
Be he good or evil, as he wills.
What you now bear, he gave, and this
Even so, you must endure. But now,
Since you are come here to our city
And this our land, you shall not want
For clothing or for aught beside
A suppliant should have, who comes
Seeking in need. And I myself
Will show where lies our town, and tell you
Our nation's name. We are Phæacians,
Who dwell here in this land and city,
And I am daughter of their lord,
Noble Alcinoüs, on whom
Their might and power depend."

So spoke she,
Then to her fair-tressed maidens cried,
Commanding:
"Stay, I pray you, maidens!
Why run at sight of this one man?
Surely you cannot deem him such
As come to do us harm. For no man
Living or yet to be, could come
Here to this land of the Phæacians
To do us evil. For we ever
Are dear to the undying gods.
We dwell apart, at earth's far end
Beyond the billowing sea; among us
No mortal man of alien race
Is ever seen. But now this man,
Ill-fated, wandering, comes hither,
And we must care for him. For beggars
And wandering men are in the care
Of Zeus himself, and though our gift
Be small, it yet is welcome.
So
My maidens, set now food and drink
Before the stranger. Let him bathe,
Down in the river, in a place
Well sheltered from the wind."
So said she,
And hearing her, they stayed their flight
And passed the word to one another,
And brought Odysseus down to bathe
In shelter, as their mistress bade—
Daughter of great Alcinoüs,
Nausicaä. And by his side
They laid out clothing, robe and tunic,
And gave him, in a flask of gold,
Smooth olive oil, and bade him bathe

There in the river's flowing stream.
Then great Odysseus spoke and said
Thus to the maidens:
"Stand, I pray you,
Maids, yonder, farther off, that I
Alone, may wash my shoulders clean
Of crusted salt, and may anoint me
Well with this oil, for long it is
Since oil has touched my skin. But here,
Before your eyes, I will not bathe:
I am ashamed to bare myself
Before you fair-tressed maidens."
So
He spoke, and they then went their way
And told their mistress. Now Odysseus
Washed clean his body in the river
Of all the crusted salt that clung
Fast to his back and mighty shoulders,
And from his head he wiped away
The dried foam of the restless sea.

Now when his body was all bathed
And bright with oil, and he had donned
The clothing the young maiden gave him—
Then great Athene, child of Zeus,
Made him yet taller to behold,
And mightier; and about his head
She made his locks curl like the clusters
That cling about the hyacinth.
As when a skilful craftsman twines
Gold about silver—such a craftsman
As both Athene and Hephæstus
Have trained in every art—and shapes
His work to beauty; even so

Upon Odysseus' neck and shoulders
Athene now shed grace.
He went
Apart alone and on the shore
He sat him down, all radiant
With grace and beauty. And the maiden
Gazed wondering, and thus she spoke
To all her fair-tressed maids:
"Now hearken,
My fair-tressed maidens, while I speak
What I must say. It cannot be
Against the will of all the gods
Who hold Olympus, that this man
Comes here among the godlike men
Of the Phæacians. For he seemed
A moment past, ill-favored; now
He seems more like the gods, who dwell
In the high heavens. Ah, I would
That there were such a man as he
To be my husband, and to come
And dwell among us here, content
Here to remain! Make haste, my maidens,
And set forth quickly food and drink
Before the stranger."
So she spoke;
They hearkened and obeyed. They set
Before Odysseus food and drink;
And now long-suffering great Odysseus
Ate and drank eagerly. It was long
Since he had tasted food.
And now
White-armed Nausicaä took thought
Of other things. For now she folded
The clothes together and she laid them
Within the cart, and then she yoked

The firm-hoofed mules, and mounted up
To her own place. And now she called
Odysseus to her, and she spoke
And said:
"Now set forth, stranger. Go
Into the city. I will help you
To my wise father's house, and there
You shall, I promise you, behold
The chosen men of all Phæacia.
Yet this thing you must do:—for truly
You do not seem to me dull-witted—
So long as we shall pass through fields
And farmlands tilled by men, so long
Shall you walk swiftly by the mules
And cart, among my maids. But later—
When we are come within the city—
Mark what I bid: All round the city
There runs a lofty wall with towers,
And by the city, on each side,
Lies a fair haven, and the road
Between is narrow. There beside it
Stand the curved ships all ranged on shore,
For here to every man is given
A station for his ship. Beyond,
Close by Poseidon's sacred shrine,
There stands our council-place, all set
With mighty rocks men dragged and planted
Deep in the earth. And here men labor
On gear for their black ships—on cables
And cloth for sails, and here they smooth
The oar-blades thin. For the Phæacians
Set not their hearts on bow or quiver;
They better love the masts of ships,
And oars, and ships of lovely line,

And in these ships they sail rejoicing
Over the whitening sea.
And I
Would keep my name from the rude speech
Of men like these, lest one of them
Blame me hereafter. In our city
Are men most insolent: a man
Of their base sort, if he should meet me,
Might say:
'And who is this, this fellow
Handsome and tall, who walks along
Behind Nausicaä? Now where
Could she have found the man? He surely
Will be her own true-love, her husband!
Perhaps it is some castaway
She welcomes, rescued from his ship,
From some far land, for we have surely
No neighbors near! Perhaps some god
Whom she has oft besought in prayer
Has come to her at last from heaven
To make her his forever. Nay,
It would have been a better plan
To go afield and find herself
A man from far away. She pays
Small honor to our own Phæacians
Here in her city, though full many
And noble are her wooers!'
So
These men will speak, and so will scandal
Be spread against me. Even I
Would blame another maid, should she
Do things like this, and set at naught
Her friends' advice, aye, and her father's
And mother's too—were they still living—

And openly should go with men
Before her marriage day.
Heed well,
Stranger, what I am now to tell you,
If you without delay would win
My father's help upon your way.
Close by the roadside you will see
A noble grove of poplars, sacred
Unto Athene. Deep within it
There flows a spring, and all about
Spreads a broad meadow. Here my father
Has his fair royal park and here
His pleasant garden, and so short
The distance from the town, a shout
Will span it easily. Here, then,
Sit you and wait awhile, till we
Are come within the town and reach
My father's house. But when you think
That we have reached the house, then enter
Into the city, asking where
To find the palace of my father,
Noble Alcinoüs. And easy
It is to know: a child can show it—
An infant—for Phæacian men
Build no such homes as this of ours,
Such as the house of the great king,
Alcinoüs.
Now when the house
Lies all about you and you stand
Within its courtyard, go you then
Swiftly through all the house until
You reach my mother. For she sits
In firelight by the hearth and spins
Wool purple as the sea, a wonder
To look upon. Her chair leans back

Against a pillar of the hearth
And close behind her sit her maidens
And there by that same pillar rests
My father's chair. Here like a god
He sits and quaffs his wine.
Pass by him,
Reach quickly forth and clasp your arms
About my mother's knees, that you
May see the day of your return.
Glad may it be and swift, though now
Your home is far away."
So said she,
And lifted up her shining whip
And struck the mules. Swiftly they left
The flowing river; well they trotted
And well they set their feet. Yet shrewdly
She reined them in that those afoot
Might follow close behind—Odysseus
And all her maidens—and with judgment
She used the lash.
And now the sun
Was at his setting, when they reached
The famed grove sacred to Athene,
And here Odysseus sat him down
And straightway prayed unto the daughter
Of mighty Zeus:
"Hear me, O child
Of ægis-bearing Zeus, O thou
Unconquerable! Heed at least
This prayer, though little heed you gave
When I was smitten, when the god
Who shakes the shores of ocean, smote me!
Grant that I find here, in this land
Of the Phæacians, love and pity."

BOOK SEVEN

SO THERE HE PRAYED, NOBLE ODYSSEUS,
TRIED BY LONG SUFFERING. AND MEANWHILE
THE STRONG MULES BORE THE MAIDEN HOMEWARD
Back to the city. Now she reached
Her father's far-famed dwelling. Here,
Just in the courtyard gate, she halted,
And here her brothers came to meet her,
Like gods to look on; and they loosed
The mules out of the cart, and carried
The clothing all within. The maiden
Now went up to her room, and there
An aged woman kindled fire, . . .
Who long had dwelt within the palace,
And served white-armed Nausicaä.

And now at last Odysseus rose
And set forth for the town. Athene
With loving forethought shed dense mist
About him as he went, for fear
Some proud Phæacian, meeting him,
Might speak in taunting words and ask
Whence he was come. Now as he stood
About to enter that fair city,
The goddess came, keen-eyed Athene,
Herself, to meet him. But she seemed
Like a young girl who carried forth
A jar for water. There she halted
Before him, and Odysseus asked:

"Could you not help me, child, to find
The house of great Alcinoüs
Who rules this people? For I am
A sea-worn stranger, hither strayed
From a far country, and know no one
In all this land and city."
Thus
In answer then, said wise Athene:
"Yes, good old stranger, I will show you
The house you ask of, for it stands
Not far from my own father's dwelling.
But take you heed and walk in silence
And I will lead the way. And cast not
Your eyes on any man, or question
Those you may meet. These folk of ours
Like strangers little; for they have
No love or welcome for a man
Come from a far-off land. For they,
Trusting the speed of their swift ships,
Cross the great gulf of sea—the god
Who shakes the shores has granted this—
For they have ships that fly as swiftly
As wings or fleeting thought."
So spoke
Pallas Athene, and she went
Quickly before, while he came after,
Following in her steps. He marvelled
To see the harbors with their ships
Shapely of line, the council-places
Of the great lords, the stately walls,
Tall, topped with battlements, a marvel
To look upon. But when they reached
The king's own glorious house, then spoke
Keen-eyed Athene:

"Here, good stranger,
This is the house you bade me show you.
And here within you shall see kings
Cherished by Zeus—seated at feast
And making festival. So enter,
Nor let fear shake your soul. The man
Who ventures boldly, wins in all things
The greater prize.
Now seek you first
The mistress in her hall. Arete
Men call her, great Rhexenor's daughter.
Alcinoüs made her his wife
And honors her as none but she
Is honored upon earth—none other
Of all the women who hold rule
Within a husband's house.
So she
Has ever had, from every heart,
True honor—aye, she has it yet,
From her dear children; from her lord,
Alcinoüs; from her folk, who look
Upon her as a god and hail her
With cries of gladness when she goes
About the city. And this queen
Lacks not rare judgment: she can quiet
Quarrels of women whom she loves,
Aye, and of men no less. If then
This queen's heart turn to you in kindness
You may well hope to see once more
Your high-roofed home and native land."

So spoke keen-eyed Athene; off
She sped then o'er the unresting deep,
And leaving pleasant Scheria,
She came to Marathon, and Athens,

City of spacious streets, and entered
Erechtheus' stately house.
Odysseus
Went meanwhile on his way and reached
The glorious palace wherein dwelt
Alcinoüs. And here he halted
While his heart marvelled, ere he crossed
The brazen threshold.
For a splendor
As of the sun or of the moon
Dwelt ever in that high-roofed home
Of great Alcinoüs. Its wall,
Wrought all of bronze, ran on both sides
Back from the threshold, and above it
A border of deep blue. The doors
That shut the massive hall, were golden;
Of silver were the posts, of bronze
The sill whereon they stood, of silver
The lintel, and of gold the handle.
And on each side there stood two beasts,
Strange shapes like dogs, of gold and silver.
Hephæstus fashioned them with skill
To keep their watch here in the house
Of great Alcinoüs: immortal
He made them, never to grow old
Through days unending.
Now within,
On either side, along the wall,
Stood seats, all ranged in order. On them
Lay coverings, dainty and fine-spun,
The work of women. And here sat
The lords and leaders of Phæacia
Eating and drinking, and their feast
Was never-ending.

Boys of gold
Were set on well-wrought pedestals,
And in their hands were blazing torches
To light that spacious hall at night
For those that feasted. . . .
Fifty women
Serve here within the house. Some grind
The bright corn in the mill; some weave
The cloth in looms, or spin the yarn,
Sitting there all astir, like leaves
Of the tall poplar, while the oil
Falls dripping from the woven cloth.
For even as Phæacian men
Above all other men are skilled
To speed the swift ship o'er the deep,
Even so the women of Phæacia
Are skilful at the loom. Athene
Has given them rare mastery
In lovely handiwork, and minds
Of noble excellence.
Without
Beyond the courtyard, by the gate,
An orchard lies, four acres wide,
A high wall running all about it.
In it grow fruit-trees great and thriving—
Pears and pomegranates, shining apples;
And here, too, thrive sweet figs and olives.
Yet never does the fruit of these
Fall off or fail, the whole year through,
Winter or summer: evermore
Some at the wind's soft breath are budding
While others round to fruit. So ever
Pear ripens after pear and apple
Follows on apple, fig on fig,
And cluster after cluster.

Near it
A vineyard too is planted, filled
With grapes in plenty. Here men parch them
In sun on levelled ground; and here
They gather them new-ripe, and here
They tread them in the press. In front
There grow the unripe grapes, but now
Shedding their blossoms, while behind
Hang others darkening. And here
Behind the vine's last rows, are gardens—
Well-ordered beds of every kind,
Bright-green the whole year through. Close by them
There run two springs: the one, divided,
Waters the garden, while the other
Speeds forth, beneath the courtyard gate,
On toward the lofty house; and from it
The townsmen come to draw them water.
And all these goodly gifts the gods
Have given Alcinoüs.
And here
Noble, long-suffering Odysseus
Stood still and gazed; but when his heart
Had marvelled at each sight, then quickly
He stepped across the sill, and entered
The hall within.
And here he found
The lords and leaders of Phæacia
Pouring libation from their cups
To the keen-eyed, swift-flashing Hermes—
One last cup, ever poured to him
Before they went to rest.
But onward,
Straight through the palace passed Odysseus,
Noble, long-suffering, while the mist
Athene poured about him, still

Clung close around him, till he stood
Before Arete and her lord,
Great King Alcinoüs.
And Odysseus
Reached forth and clasped Arete's knees,
And, at that instant, the strange mist
Melted and left him, and they all
Sat speechless in the hall, beholding
This man before them there, and stared,
Silent in wonder.
Then Odysseus
Thus spoke beseeching:
"O Arete,
Child of Rhexenor, to your husband
And to your knees I come at last
Through many a labor—and to these
Who sit at feast here. May the gods
Grant them life's blessings; may they each
Leave to their children all the wealth
Heaped in their halls, and all the honor
Their people yield them. But, I pray,
Speed now my journey: help me quickly
To reach my native land, for now
Far from my friends I am enduring
Bitter affliction."
So he spoke,
And sat him down upon the hearth
Among the ashes by the fire.
And all were speechless, and sat silent.
At last the noble Echeneüs
The councilor, spoke up, the oldest
Of all Phæacians, far excelling
All other men in speech, and wise
In ancient wisdom. He addressed them
With kindly thought and said:

"Now this,
Alcinoüs, is neither seemly
Nor fitting, that a guest and stranger
Should sit here thus among the ashes
Upon your hearth. Each man holds back
Waiting upon your word. So come,
And bid the stranger rise and seat him
Upon a silver-studded chair,
And bid the herald mix more wine
That we may now pour forth libation
To Zeus whose joy is in the thunder,
Who watches over suppliants
Worthy his care. Then let the matron
Serve to the stranger, for his supper,
What she may have in store."
And straightway
Noble and great Alcinoüs
Hearkened, and reaching forth his hand,
He raised the ready, wise Odysseus
Up from his hearth, and bade him sit
Upon a shining chair; and made
His own son yield his place, the young
Manly Laodamas, whose chair
Stood by his own—the son he loved
Dearest of all. . . .
Now when each man
Had poured libation and had drunk
To his heart's fill, Alcinoüs
Spoke up and said:
"Now hear my words,
Phæacian lords and leaders: I
Would speak as my heart bids. Since now
Our feast is ended, get you home
And lay you down to rest. We shall
At dawn tomorrow call our elders

In fuller number here to welcome
Our guest within our hall and make
Due offering to the gods. Then next
Let us consider how to aid him
Upon his way, that he may reach
His own dear land. . . . And he shall suffer
No pain or evil as he journeys
Until he set his foot once more
Upon his native land. And what
Thereafter shall befall must be
As fate and the unsparing spinners
Wove in his thread of life when first
His mother bore him.
Yet if he,
Perchance, should be a deathless god
Come here from heaven among us—plainly
The gods are plotting some new plan
Against us, for till now they ever
Have come among us openly
When we have made them offerings
Of noble hecatombs, and sat
And feasted with us, even as we;
And if a man who walked alone
Should meet them, they made no concealment,
For we are of their kin—aye, even
As are the Cyclops or the tribes
Of savage Giants."
Then thus answered
The shrewd Odysseus:
"Think of me,
Alcinoüs, not thus—nay, rather
Far otherwise. For I am not
Of the undying gods that dwell
High in wide heaven, not like to them
In form or nature: I am only

Of men that perish. And whoever
Of all mankind you know, have borne
The heaviest load of grief—my sorrows
I say, will equal theirs. I might
Tell over still more evils, all
That I have borne at heaven's bidding;
But let me now, for all my sorrow,
Take food and eat. What is more shameless,
More doglike, than a hungering belly
Which bids a man obey its bidding
Though he be worn with suffering,
And sorrow fill his heart. So now,
Though sorrow fills my heart, this still
Bids eat and drink, makes me forget
All I have suffered—all but this—
To eat my fill. Yet now, I pray you
Bestir yourself at break of day,
That you may set me, luckless man,
In my own land. Let me but see it,
Though life then leave me."

So he spoke,
And all approved and said to help
The stranger on his way. And now
When all had poured and drunken wine
To their hearts' fill, then home they went
Each to his rest.
And none was left
Within the hall now but Odysseus
And, sitting by his side, Arete
And great Alcinoüs; and the maids
Bore off the dishes. Then began
White-armed Arete first, for she
Had seen and knew that robe and tunic,
Fair garments she herself had wrought

Among her hand-maidens. So now
She spoke, and in wing'd words she said:
"This question, stranger, I would ask you,
Now, first of all, myself:—Who are you?
Whence are you come and of what people?
Who was it gave these clothes you wear?
Did you not say that you came hither
Adrift upon the deep?"
Then answered
The shrewd Odysseus:
"Hard indeed
It is, O queen, to tell the tale
Of all my sufferings, for the gods
Have sent me many. But the thing
You ask, I now will tell:
There lies
Far out amidst the deep, an island,
Ogygia, and here there dwells
Fair-haired Calypso, Atlas' daughter,
A dread and crafty goddess. Never
Will god or mortal man go thither
To meet her there. But some high power
Drove me, ill-fated, to her hearth,
Alone! For Zeus, with flashing bolt,
Smote my swift ship and all asunder
He rent her, far at sea, amidst
The wine-dark deep.
So on that isle
I dwelt for seven years, and wet
With ceaseless tears the immortal garments
Calypso gave me. But at length
The eighth year came, as seasons circled,
And now she bade me sail away
And urged me. Either there had come
A message sent from Zeus, or she,

In her own heart, had changed. So thence
Upon a well-lashed raft she sent me.*

. . . . . .

And there among the leaves, sad-hearted,
I slept all night till morn—till noon—
Nay, but the sun was towards his setting
When sweet sleep left me. Then I saw
Your daughter's maidens at their play
Upon the sands, and her among them.
She seemed a goddess. I besought her,
A suppliant. She showed no lack
Of worthy wisdom: seldom men
May hope for such in maids—the young
Are ever heedless. And she gave me
My fill of food and glowing wine,
And bade me bathe me in the river
And gave these garments. All this tale,
Though told in grief, is true."

Then answered
Alcinoüs and said:

"Now surely,
Stranger, my child did not perceive
The fitting way: she did not bring you
Among her maidens to our home,
Yet it was she you first besought,
Her suppliant."

Then thus replied
The shrewd Odysseus:

"Noble king,
Do not reprove the maid for this,
For she is blameless. For she bade me
Follow behind among her maidens,

* The translation of the omitted passage will be found, altered to the third person, on pages 9 and 10. It tells of the voyage to Scheria, summarizing the latter part of Book V. Odysseus is wrecked, swims ashore and sleeps in a thicket.

But this I would not do, from shame
And fear, lest seeing me, your heart
Might cloud with anger. For we children
Of mortal men here on the earth
Are ready to think evil."

Then
Alcinoüs replied:

"My heart
Within my breast never, O stranger,
Is angry without cause. Calm judgment
Is ever best. But yet I would—
So help me mighty Father Zeus
And great Athene and Apollo—
I would some man like you might take
My daughter for his wife, and be
As my own son, and bide among us,
For I would give you home and wealth
Could you consent to stay. Yet never
Shall a Phæacian hold you here
Against your will. May Father Zeus
Ne'er favor such a deed! Nay, now,
To prove my purpose, I will name
The day to send you forth: that day
Shall be tomorrow. You shall lie
Fast bound in sleep, the while my rowers
Speed o'er calm seas until you come
To your own land and home, wherever
Your heart may long to go—nay, even
Though it lay farther than Eubœa,
Farthest of all lands say our seamen,
For they once saw it. For they bore
The bright-haired Rhadamanthus thither
When he went seeking Tityus,
The son of Earth. Thither they went
And that same day came home again,

Nor yet were wearied. And you now
Shall learn yourself how far my ships
Excel all others—how the oars
Of my young men tear up the sea!"

So said he, and long-tried Odysseus
Heard gladly, and he spoke and prayed,
Calling on Zeus:
"O Zeus, great Father,
Grant that Alcinoüs bring to pass
All he has promised. So his fame
Shall live unquenched on fruitful earth,
And I at last shall come again
To my own land."
So spoke they there,
One with the other.
Now arose
White-armed Arete and she bade
Her maids set forth a bed beneath
The outer portico, and spread
Fair purple cushions and then lay
Soft drapery above, with shawls
Of wool o'er all, which one might draw
Round him for covering. And now,
With torches in their hands, the maids
Passed from the hall, and when their hands
With eager haste had made quite ready
That cosy bed, they came again
And stood before Odysseus, saying,
"Rise, stranger: seek your rest: your bed
Is made and ready."
So they spoke,
And welcome did he find it then
To lay him down to sleep. So there
He lay asleep, noble Odysseus,

Sore-tried, in that well-corded bed
Beneath the echoing portico.
And far within an inner chamber
Of his high house, Alcinoüs
Lay down to sleep. And close beside him
His wife and queen prepared her bed.

BOOK EIGHT

WHEN EARLY DAWN APPEARED, ROSE-FINGERED,
ALCINOÜS, OF MIGHT DIVINE,
ROSE FROM HIS BED; THEN, TOO, AROSE
Noble Odysseus, Troy's despoiler.
And great Alcinoüs led the way
To the Phæacians' council-place,
Close by the ships. . . . And swiftly all
That gathering place, aye, every seat,
Was filled with those that hastened thither.
And many marvelled then, beholding
Laërtes' prudent son, for round him,
O'er head and shoulders, great Athene
Poured forth a wondrous grace: he seemed
Taller and mightier.
And when all
Were come and gathered, thus then spoke
Alcinoüs before them, saying:
"Hear me, Phæacian lords and leaders:
This stranger—who he is, I know not—
Has wandered hither to my home,
Perhaps from western lands, perhaps
From lands toward sunrise. He implores
Our help upon his way and pleads
For our sure promise. Let us now,
As we have done of old, make haste
And give our help. For no man ever
Who seeks my home for help, need sit
And wait and sorrow for the lack

Of aid upon his way. Come, then,
And launch into the sacred sea
A new black ship, ready to sail
Her maiden voyage. And choose out
The two and fifty youths whom trial
Has proved our best. And let these all
Lash fast the oars, each to its pin,
Then come ashore, and in my house
Fall to and feast in haste, and well
Will I provide for all. These orders
I give the younger men. You others,
You scepter-bearing lords, come all
To our fair hall, and in my house
Give welcome to this guest. Let no one
Remain away. And summon thither
Demodocus, the sacred minstrel,
To whom the gods have given power
To gladden us with song, whatever
His heart may bid him sing."

So said he,
And led the way, and after him
Followed his sceptered lords. Off sped
A herald for the sacred minstrel,
And two and fifty chosen youths
Went as he bade them, to the shore
Of the unresting sea. When these
Came to the ship beside the sea,
They drew the black ship down the shore
To the deep waters and they set
The mast and sail in the black ship,
And lashed the oars with leather thongs.
Far out they moored her, riding high
Upon the waters, and so came

To the great palace of their lord,
Prudent Alcinoüs.
And now
The porticoes and courts and halls
Were thronged with feasters. And before them
Alcinoüs offered up twelve sheep,
Eight white-toothed swine, and oxen twain
Of swinging pace. All these they flayed
And made them ready, and prepared
A joyous feast.
And now drew near
The herald, leading the good minstrel.
The muse, who loved him, gave him gifts
Both good and evil: for she took
His sight, but gave sweet song.
For him,
Out in the midst of all the feasters,
Pontonoüs set forth a chair
Studded with silver, leaning it
By a tall pillar. O'er his head,
High on a peg, the herald hung
His clear-toned lyre, and showed him how
To grasp it with his hands. And near him,
On a fair table, he set down
A basket, and a cup whence he
Might drink when his heart bade.
Now all
Reached forth their hands to the good feast
Spread there before them; and when longing
For food and drink had passed, the muse
Then stirred the spirit of the minstrel
To sing men's glorious deeds—that song
Whose glory is as wide as heaven,
The song of the great strife that rose
Between Odysseus and Achilles:

How once, at a high feast where men
Did honor to the gods, these two
Contended with fierce words. This song
The far-famed minstrel sang.
And, hearing,
Odysseus seized in his strong hands
His great empurpled cloak and drew it
About his head and hid from sight
The beauty of his face, ashamed
That the Phæacians should behold
The tears flow from his eyes. And ever
Whene'er the sacred minstrel ceased
His song awhile, Odysseus then
Would dry his eyes and draw away
The cloak that veiled his head, and take
The double cup and pour libation
Unto the gods. But evermore
When once again he sang—for ever
The lords of the Phæacians prayed him,
Such joy his words gave all—again
Odysseus veiled his head and sorrowed.

And so his weeping went unseen
By all men there but one;—one, only,
Alcinoüs, beheld and heeded,
For he was sitting near and heard
His heavy sighing. Quickly then
He spoke to those Phæacian lords,
Who loved the oar:
"Hark to my words,
You lords and leaders of Phæacia.
Now every heart is satisfied
With food well-served, and with the lyre,
Fit mate to the good feast. So now
Let us go forth and try our skill

In sports of every kind. This stranger,
When he shall reach his home again,
May tell his friends how we Phæacians,
Better than all men else, can box,
Wrestle, and leap, and run."
So said he,
And led the way, and they all followed.
And now they reached the gathering place,
While all the folk came thronging after,
And many a chosen youth stood ready
To strive there in their sports. . . .

And now,
When every heart was yet delighted
With all these sports, before them, thus
Laodamas spoke up, the son
Of great Alcinoüs:
"Come, friends,
And ask this stranger if he know
And practice any sport. He seems
Not bad of build in calves and thighs,
And upward—arms and sturdy neck
And mighty sinew. He keeps yet
The strength of youth, but he is broken
By many hardships, for I tell you
Nothing is quicker than the sea
To rob a man of strength—what though
It once was great indeed."
Then thus
Euryalus spoke up in answer:
"What you have said, Laodamas,
Is right and fitting."
The good son
Of great Alcinoüs heard and went

And stood amidst the throng, and thus
Spoke to Odysseus:
"Pray come hither,
Grave stranger, come and try your skill
Here in our sports, if you are yet
Practised in any. It is fitting
A man should master sports, for never
May any man, though long he live,
Get greater glory than he wins
With his own hands and feet. So come
And make the trial and chase hence
Your cares out of your heart. Soon now
You shall set forth, for look, already
Your ship is launched, and all her men
Are ready for the sea."
Then spoke
In answer wise Odysseus:
"Why,
Laodamas, do you thus mock me,
Bidding me do this? For my heart
Knows more of grief than games, for many
The evils I have borne, and many
The hardships suffered. So, to-day,
I sit amidst your gathering
And long but for my journey home,
And crave this only of your king
And all your people."
And thus answered
Euryalus, and openly
Rebuked Odysseus:
"No indeed,
Stranger, you do not look like one
Who leads in sports, though sports are common
Among mankind—I take you, rather,
For such a man as up and down

Goes plying in a well-oared ship,
The master of a crew of seamen
Who travel but for trade—a man
Whose mind is on his cargo, eager
For wares that bring him greedy profits!
No—sports are not for you!"
Then sternly
Ready Odysseus frowned on him
And said:
"You speak unfittingly,
Stranger. You seem to me a man
Of foolish insolence. For truly
It is not to all men the gods
Have given their good gifts of beauty,
Wisdom, and skill of speech. One man
Is trifling to behold, and yet
A god has crowned his words with grace,
And those who see him rise, rejoice.
His speech is sure and wins the heart
With modest worth: wherever men
Are met, this man shines forth. Another
Is like the gods to see, and yet
No beauty crowns his words. Even so
You, to the eye, are fair and noble—
No god could make a finer man—
But you are weak of wit. You anger
My soul within me when you speak
Words so ill-bred. Yet I am not,
For all your talk, unskilled in sports.
Nay, once, I think, I stood among
The foremost of all men, while yet
My heart might trust the strength of youth
And these two arms of mine. But now
I am bound down by grief and hardship,
For much have I endured the while

I battled on through wars of men
And angry waves. Yet even so,
Though many an evil I have borne,
I will attempt your sports. Your words
Have stung my spirit and have stirred
The heart within me."
So he spoke
And, clad still in his cloak, he sprang
And grasped a discus, larger, thicker,
And heavier by far than such
As the Phæacians used in contest.
He swung this round and sent it flying
With his strong arm, and as it flew
The stone hummed loudly. Down then fell,
Crouching to earth, those bold Phæacians.
Famed seamen, wielders of long oars,
As o'er them sped that stone.
It flew
From his strong arm beyond the mark
Of all men else.
And now Athene
Took on man's form and set a mark
Where the stone fell, and spoke and said:
"Even a blind man might, O stranger,
Find this by groping, for it lies
Not where the rest lie massed together
But far beyond them all. Take heart!
This game at least is won. No man
Of the Phæacians will cast further
Or equal this of yours."
So said she,
And at her words long-tried Odysseus
Rejoiced, made glad to see a friend
Upon that field. And thus, light-hearted,
He spoke to the Phæacians:

"Come,
Now reach that mark, young men! And soon
I'll send a second cast as far
Or farther yet. If there be any
Among you others—one whose heart
And spirit bid him, let him come
And make his trial. For you now
Have angered me indeed. Come, then,
Box, wrestle—aye, or run—I care not
What it may be! For I will match
Any Phæacian save but one,
Laodamas. He is my host,
And who would strive against the man
Who bids him welcome? For a man
Wants wit and worth who, far from home,
Will dare his host to strife: he harms
His own good fortune. For the rest,
I fear not one, nor yet despise them,
But I would know them face to face
And try their worth. For in all sports
I am no weakling—in all feats
That men may vie in. For my hands
Wield well the polished bow—yes, I
Would be the first to strike the man
I aimed my shaft at, though around him
Were thronged my foes, while at my side
Stood many a comrade, each one aiming
His arrow at his man. . . .

Know, too,
I cast the spear as far as others
Can shoot an arrow. Yet I fear
That in the footrace some Phæacian
Might pass me by, for many a wave

Has mastered me, and on my ship
My hours of ease were few: my sinews
Have lost their strength."
So spoke Odysseus,
And all the rest stood hushed in silence.
Alcinoüs alone made answer:
"In what you say, O stranger, nothing
Gives us displeasure. You but wish
To show the worth that lies within you,
With rightful anger that this man
Who stood beside you at our sport,
Spoke tauntingly, though surely no one
Would speak thus lightly of your worth
If but his mind had understanding
Of fitting speech. But hearken now
These words, that you may tell the tale
Among your lords when in your hall
You feast with wife and children, there
Remembering our merits—aye,
All the proud deeds that Zeus has granted
We might accomplish, from the days
Of our great fathers. For we stand not
Beyond compare as boxers—nay,
Nor yet as wrestlers, but we run
Swiftly afoot, and in our ships
Are best of all men. We hold dear
The dance and feast and lyre; we love
Changes of raiment, and warm baths,
And pleasant slumber.
But now come,
You chosen dancers of Phæacia,
And play your part, and so our guest
When he comes home, may tell his friends
How we excel all men on earth

In seamanship, in speed of foot,
In dance and singing. . . ."

And then said
Alcinoüs:
"Heed now my words,
You lords and leaders of Phæacia.
Come, let us give the stranger gifts
As is befitting. . . .

And let now
Euryalus make fit amends
By words and gift, because he spoke
In unbecoming speech."
So said he,
And all approved and gave command,
And each one sent his page to bring
The gifts agreed. And now in answer
Thus spoke Euryalus:
"I now,
Mighty Alcinoüs, renowned
Above all men, will make the stranger
My full amends as you have bidden.
I give him this bronze sword; its hilt
Of silver, and of ivory
The sheath that shuts it in. Most precious
May this gift prove to him!"
So said he,
And put into Odysseus' hand
That silver-studded sword, and spoke
In wing'd words, saying:
"Thus I give,
Grave stranger, greeting. If a word
Of evil omen has been spoken,
Now let the swift winds snatch it hence

And bear it far. And may the gods
Grant that you see your wife and reach
Your own dear land. Sorely you suffer,
Long parted from your friends."
Then thus
The wise Odysseus answered:
"Friend,
I greet you too, and may the gods
Grant you good fortune. May you never
Miss the good sword you gave with words
So kind and gracious."
So he spoke,
And therewith slung about his shoulders
His silver-studded sword.

And now,
When the sun set, each man brought thither
His noble gifts; the stately heralds
Then bore these to the hall, and there
The sons of great Alcinoüs
Took all those rare and lovely gifts
And set them down before their mother.
Then noble, great Alcinoüs
Led in his mighty lords. They entered
And sat them in their seats of honor.
Then thus the great Alcinoüs
Spoke to Arete:
"Bring now, wife,
A good chest hither, of the best,
And in it place a new-washed robe
And tunic too, and set a caldron
Upon the fire, and warm him water
That he may bathe and then delight him
With feast and minstrel's song." . . .

He spoke.
(The maidens, as he bade, made ready
The water for the bath.) Meanwhile
Arete from her chamber brought
A fair chest for the stranger. In it
She set the goodly gifts—the gold
And clothing the Phæacians gave,
And she herself put in a robe
And a fair tunic, and she spoke
In wing'd words saying:
"Look yourself
To making fast the lid: and lash
A strong line quickly round, lest some one
Should rob you on your way, when you—
As you shall do ere long—shall lie
In the black ship in sweetest slumber."

Long-tried Odysseus heard her counsel,
And fitted fast the lid and cast
A lashing round it cunningly—
A secret knot that mighty Circe
Herself had taught him. . . .

When the maidens
Had bathed him and anointed him
With shining oil and put upon him
A cloak and tunic fair, he went
Forth from his bath to join the men
Who sat at banquet.
And before him,
Hard by a pillar that upheld
The roof of that proud hall, there stood
In beauty given by the gods,
Nausicaä, and looked with wonder
Upon Odysseus standing there

Before her eyes, and spoke to him
And with wing'd words she said:
"Farewell,
Stranger—and sometimes in your home
Remember me. To me you owe
The life I saved for you."
And thus
Answered and spoke the wise Odysseus:
"Nausicaä, daughter of high-souled
Alcinoüs, I pray that Zeus,
Lord of the thunder, grant me this:
That I come home once more and see
The day of my return, for then
I will give worship to you, even
As to a god, for all my days
Forever. For to you, O maiden,
I owe my life."
So spoke Odysseus,
Then took his seat beside the king.
And now men served forth food to each,
And mingled wine. At length there came
The herald with the trusty minstrel
And sat him down amidst the feast,
His seat against a lofty pillar.
Then spoke Odysseus to a servant,
For from the chine of a great boar,
White-toothed, he now had cut a portion
And much remained there yet, the fat
Thick on both sides:
"Come, herald, now,
And set before Demodocus
This meat and bid him eat. For I—
Though my own heart be sad—salute him,
For minstrels should have reverence
And honor from all men on earth:

The muse has taught them how to sing,
And loves all minstrels."
So he spoke.
The herald bore the food and gave it
Into the minstrel's hands. He took it,
And he was glad at heart. Then all
Stretched forth their hands to the good food
That lay before them. And when longing
For food and drink had left them, thus
Spoke wise Odysseus to the minstrel:
"Demodocus, I give you praise
Beyond all mortal men; for either
The Muse herself, the child of Zeus,
Has been your teacher, or Apollo;
For you have sung us well and truly
The tale of the Achæans—all
They wrought and suffered, all their labors,
As you yourself had been among them
Or heard from one who was. But now
Change to another tale and sing
The strange contriving of that horse,
That shape of wood Epeius wrought
With great Athene's aid—and how
Noble Odysseus brought this thing
Of hidden evil to the top
Of Troy's high citadel, all filled
With warriors who should lay in ruin
The town of Ilium. If now
You tell this tale aright, then I
Will witness to all men, the god
Has given you, with open hand,
His gift of song."
So spoke Odysseus.
Thereat the minstrel—for the god
Stirred him to sing—began his song.

He took the tale up where the Argives,
Embarking in their well-oared ships,
Went sailing off, first casting fire
On all their camp. Yet some of them
Still sat amidst the assembled Trojans,
Hidden within the horse. For these
Had dragged it up with their own hands
Into their citadel and there
It stood among them, while around it
They sat and argued long and vainly.
Three plans found favor: some would split
The hollow shape of wood with blows
Of the stern axe; some said to drag it
Forth to the summit's edge and cast it
Down to the rocks; and some would keep
This wondrous thing to win for them
The favor of the gods. Even so
At last, the end must be accomplished:
Fate said that Troy must fall if once
It took within its circling walls
That mighty horse of wood, wherein
Lay ambushed all the chosen chiefs
Of the Achæans, who were bringing
Ruin and death to Troy.

He sang
How they laid waste that whole wide city,
Those sons of the Achæans, thronging
Forth from the horse and leaving empty
That hollow lurking-place. He sang
How each went forth on his own way
To waste that towered town. But swiftly
Like the great god of war, Odysseus
With godlike Menelaüs sought
Deïphobus' house, and there—so sang
The minstrel—dared the fiercest battle,

And, through the aid of high Athene,
Won victory at last.
Such deeds
The famous minstrel sang. Odysseus
Was melted by his song, and tears
Flowed from his eyes and wet his cheeks.
As when a woman wails and clings
To her dear husband who lies fallen
Before his city and his people,
Striving to ward from town and children
The dread day of unsparing ruin:—
She sees him dying, quivering
In death before her, and she wraps
Her body round him and cries out
In piercing sorrow. But behind her
The enemy press on with spears
And drive her forth to slavery
To suffer toil and grief. Her cheeks
Are wasted with her piteous weeping.
Even so piteously the tears
Flowed from Odysseus' eyes.
The tears
That he thus wept were shed unseen
By all men there but one. One only,
Alcinoüs, beheld and heeded.
For he sat near him and he heard
His heavy groaning. Quickly then
He spoke to his Phæacian lords,
Who loved the oar:
"Hark to my words,
You lords and leaders of Phæacia
And let Demodocus now silence
His clear-toned lyre. For what he sings
Delights not all alike. Since first
Our feast began and the good singer

Began his song, the stranger never
Has ceased from bitter weeping. Surely
Some grief lies near his heart. Come, then,
And cease the song, that all alike
May share in pleasure, host and guest.
Aye, this is fitter, for our feast
Is for our honored guest.
Yet now,
No longer, stranger, hide from us
In crafty caution what I ask you.
Fitter it is to speak. So tell me
What is the name by which your father
And mother called you once?
And tell us
Your land, your people, and your city,
So that our ships may understand
Their course, and bear you there. Our ships
Here in Phæacia have no pilots
To steer their course, nor have they rudders
Like other ships; for they themselves
Know well their master's thought and purpose,
And know the cities and rich plains
Of all men everywhere; and swiftly
They cross the great gulf of the sea,
Though mist and cloud lie thick; and never
Need those within them have a fear
Of harm or loss.
But tell me now,
And make all plain: Whither have been
Your wanderings? To what lands of men
Have you gone straying? Are they cruel
And wild, and ignorant of right,
Or kind to strangers and with minds
That fear the gods? And tell me why
You weep and sorrow in your heart

To hear the fortunes of the Argives
And Ilium's fall. It was the gods
Who brought these things to pass and wove
For each his doom, that men hereafter
Might hear the tale in song. Perhaps
Some man of your own kin was slain
There before Ilium—some man
Of noble worth, a son-in-law,
Or a wife's father: such stand nearest,
Next to our kin by blood. Or was it
Some friend you knew and loved? A friend
Of wise and understanding heart
Is dear to us as any brother."

BOOK NINE

THEN WISE ODYSSEUS ANSWERED HIM
AND SAID:

"MIGHTY ALCINOÜS,
Honored of all men, good indeed
It is to hear the minstrelsy
Of such a singer, for he sings
Even as a god. Never, I think,
Can man attain a fairer goal
Than this:—when all a people meet
In joy and friendship. Side by side
They sit in the great hall at feast
And hear the minstrel's song. Beside them
Stand tables heaped with meat and bread.
While ever he who serves the wine
Dips from the mixing-bowl and fills
The feasters' cups. Such scenes I deem
Of all scenes, sweetest.
But your heart
Now urges you to ask what sorrow
Brings forth these sighs—though this but leads me
To sigh and weep the more. Nay, then—
What shall I tell you first, and what
Leave to the last? For many a sorrow
The gods that dwell on high have given
To be my lot.
And first of all
I will tell forth my name that you,
Like all, may know it; and at last,
When I have shunned death's cruel day,

We may be friends still, host and guest,
Though I dwell far away.
I am
ODYSSEUS, great Laërtes' son,
For cunning plans of every kind
Known among men; and even to heaven
Has spread my fame. My native land
Is Ithaca, a sun-bright island
Where rises Neriton, a mountain
Far-seen, with wind-stirred woods. About it
Lie many an island, close together—
Doulichium, wooded Zacynthus,
And Same. Ithaca itself
Is low of shore and lies far out
To sea and toward the west: the others
Lie toward the dawn and sunrise. Rugged
It is, this land of mine, yet breeds
A sturdy youth, and I can find
No land more sweet to me than this,
My native land.
A mighty goddess,
Calypso, kept me thence; and Circe
With treacherous arts would hold me prisoned
In her Ææan hall, and longed
To have me for her lord, yet these
Could never change the heart within me.
For nothing to one's heart is sweeter
Than home and parents—nay, what matter
How rich that far-off home may be,
If in strange lands it lie, afar
From those who gave you life.
But come,
For I will tell the many sorrows
Zeus sent upon me as I travelled
Homeward from Troy.

The wind that bore
My ships from Ilium brought me quickly
To the Ciconians, whose city
Is Ismarus. And here my men
Laid waste the town and slew the people,
And from the town we took the women
And plenteous booty; and all this
We parted duly: no man lacked
His fitting share. And now I bade
My men make haste and flee; but they,
Poor fools indeed, obeyed not; nay,
There they remained, and much good wine
They drank there, and upon the shore
Slew many sheep and crook-horned cattle
Of swaying pace.
But while they lingered,
Ciconians who had fled away
Cried to their kin, Ciconians
Who dwelt hard by. And these were many
And braver far, an inland folk,
Who fought full well against their foes
In chariots drawn by steeds, or even,
If need compelled, afoot. And these
At dawn came thronging, thick as leaves
Or blossoms in the spring. Alas,
Evil the destiny that came
From Zeus upon us hapless men
To make our sufferings worse. For there
By our swift ships these men arrayed
Their line and gave us battle. Man
Fought against man, hurling their spears
With brazen points. And while it yet
Was morning, while the sacred day
Waxed stronger, still our men made stand
And beat them back. But when the sun

Had sunken low and herds came home,
Then the Ciconians turned our men
To flight and mastered them. Six men
We lost from every ship, dear comrades,
Good men at arms. The rest escaped
From death and fate.

So thence once more
We sailed forth on our way, rejoiced
We were escaped from death, yet grieving
For our dear comrades lost; yet thence
Our curved ships did not sail till thrice
We called aloud on each poor comrade
Who died there on that plain, struck down
By the Ciconians.

And now
Great Zeus, who guides the clouds, sent forth
Against our ships a wild north wind,
A raging tempest, and enshrouded
In dark clouds land and sea. Deep night
Came rolling from on high. Our ships
Drove headlong, while their sails were riven
Asunder by that gale; but these
We stored beneath the decks, still toiling
In dread of death, and striving ever,
Rowed on and reached the land.

And here
Two nights and two long days we lay
Eating our hearts away in grief
And weariness, but when at last
Dawn came, bright-haired, and brought the light
Of the third day, we raised the masts,
And spreading the white sails, sat idle
While wind and helmsman held the ship
True to her way.

And I might now
Unharmed have come to my own land;
But as I rounded Cape Maleia
I met a current and high seas
And strong north wind; these swept my ships
Out of their course, on past Cythera
To open sea.
So for nine days,
Driven by deadly winds, my ships
Sped on across the deep. At last,
On the tenth day, we reached the land
Where dwell the Lotus-eaters, men
Whose food is flowers. And we all
Here went ashore and drew us water,
And by the sides of their swift ships
My men prepared their meal. And now
When we at last had had our fill
Of meat and drink, I sent forth men
To learn what manner of mankind
That live by bread might dwell here. Two
I chose to go and sent with them
A third, a herald. And these quickly
Went forth into that land and mingled
Among the Lotus-eaters. Never
Did these men, eaters of the lotus,
Plan evil to my men, and yet
They gave them of the lotus flower
And bade them eat of it, and lo,
Whatever man of them but tasted
That blossom strange and honey-sweet,
Naught cared he then to hasten back
With tidings to the ships, or ever
Turn homeward any more, but longed
To dwell there with the Lotus-eaters,
And pluck and eat the lotus blossoms
And think no more of home.

But these
I brought back to the ships by force,
Though they lamented, and I dragged them
Aboard the hollow ships and bound them
Beneath the benches. Then I bade
The rest, my true companions, hasten
Aboard the ships, lest one of them
Taste of the lotus, too, and lose
All memory of home. So straightway
They came aboard and sat them down
In order on the thwarts and smote
The foaming sea with oars.

So thence
We sailed upon our way sad-hearted.
And now we came unto the land
Where dwell the Cyclops—arrogant
And lawless beings, who, with trust
In the undying gods, plough not
Nor plant with hands a single plant.
Yet crops spring up for them unsown
On fields untended—wheat and barley
And vines that bear full-clustered grapes
To make them wine. The rain of Zeus
Still brings increase in all. These men
Have neither meeting-place for council
Nor settled laws. They live apart
On lofty mountain ridges, dwelling
In hollow caverns. Each makes laws
For wife and child, and gives no heed
To any save himself.

There lies,
Facing the Cyclops' land, an island,
Sheltering the haven's outer side,
Not near, nor yet far out. All rough
It is, and wooded; in it dwell

Wild goats innumerable; no foot
Of passer-by affrights them; never
Do hunters with their dogs come hither,
Toiling with pain through forest thickets
Or over mountain heights. No shepherd
Is ever seen here, and no ploughman,
But barren and untilled this land
Lies desolate of men, a pasture
For bleating goats.
For here among
These Cyclops, there is found no ship
Of ruddy bows, nor any builder
To build them well-oared ships to serve
Their masters' need, and sail afar
To cities of mankind, for often
Men cross the sea in ships and meet
One with another. With such ships
They might have made that isle of theirs
Most fair to dwell in, for that land
Was nowise poor but ever bore
All things in season. For here meadows,
Moist fields and tender, lie beside
The foam-white sea; and here grow vines
That never wither; the land lies
Level for ploughing. Here a man
Might gather harvest every season,
So rich the soil beneath.
Here lies
A harbor with good shelter; here
One need not moor his ship, nor anchor,
Nor lead his lines to land, but only
Run up his ship on shore and wait
Till once again men's hearts bid sail
And fair winds blow. And close beside
The harbor's head there flowed clear water,

A spring within a cave: about it
Tall poplars grew.
Thither we sailed
Seeking the land. Surely it was
Some god that gave us guidance thither
Through the dense night, for we could see
Nothing before our eyes: the mist
Shut close about the ships; no moon
Showed forth in heaven, for clouds enclosed it.
So no man with his eyes beheld
That isle or saw the long seas rolling
Against the land till we had beached
Our well-benched ships.
We drew our ships
Forth on the sands and lowered sail,
And we ourselves went up beyond
The breaking of the seas, and there
We fell asleep, and lay awaiting
The sacred dawn.

But when the dawn
Came, early-born and rosy-fingered,
We went forth, roaming through the island,
Gazing in wonder. And the Nymphs,
Daughters of ægis-bearing Zeus,
Stirred from their lairs the mountain goats
To give my men fresh meat. We brought
Up from the ships curved bows and spears,
Long-shafted, for the hunt; then parting
Into three bands, we shot our weapons.
And noble sport the gods now gave us:
Twelve ships were in my company
And nine goats fell to each: my men
Set ten aside for me. And so
All day until the sun went down

We sat at feast with meat in plenty
And pleasant wine, for still unspent
Was the red wine we brought with us
Stored in our ships, for every man
Had drawn him plenteous jars of wine
When we laid waste the sacred city
Of the Ciconians.
Now we looked
And saw not far away the mainland
Where dwelt the Cyclops. And we saw
Smoke rise, and heard the speech of men
And bleat of sheep and goats. Then came
The setting of the sun and darkness;
And there we slept beside the breakers.
But when the earliest dawn appeared
Rose-fingered, then I called together
My men and spoke to all:
'Rest here,
Dear comrades, while with my own ship
And my own men I go to learn
What men these are—if wild and cruel
And ignorant of right, or kind
To every stranger and with hearts
That fear the gods.'
I spoke and went
Aboard my ship and bade my men
Embark and loose the cables. Quickly
They came aboard and sat them down
Each in his place and smote with oars
The whitening sea.

Now when we reached
That land that lay hard by, we saw
Upon its utmost point a cave
Close to the sea: high-roofed it was,

With laurel overhung, and many
The flocks of sheep and goats that there
Found shelter in the night. Around it
A courtyard lay, high-walled with stones
Set deep in earth, with lofty pines
And high-leaved oaks.
Within this lair
A man was wont to sleep, a monster
Who grazed his sheep far off, alone,
Nor ever mingled with his kind,
But lonely dwelt—lawless and evil.
And marvellously was he shapen—
This monstrous being, not like mortals
That live by bread, but like a peak
That rising rough with woods stands forth
Apart from other hills.
And I
Now bade my trusty men to bide
Close by the ship and guard the ship,
But twelve I chose, the best of all,
And we set forth.
I bore with me
A goatskin filled with dark sweet wine,
Which Maron, priest of Phœbus, gave me . . .
Sweet and unmixed, a drink for gods.
Not one of all his slaves or servants
Might taste that wine at home, save only
Himself, his wife, and the good matron
Who had his house in charge. Whenever
They drank that red wine, honey-sweet,
He took one cup, no more, and served it
Mingled with water twenty times
The measure of the wine; and yet
Up from the mixing-bowl there rose
Rare scent and sweetness, till no man

Could find it easy to refrain
From drinking of that wine. I filled
A great skin with this, and I bore it
As I set forth, and bore besides
Food in a leathern sack. For now
My fearless heart foresaw a meeting
With a strange man of monstrous might—
A savage, scornful of the gods
And of man's law.
Straightway we reached
His cave and entered, but we found not
The man within. For far away
He herded, while they grazed at pasture,
His goodly flock. So on we passed
Far into that great cave and marvelled
At all we saw within. Here stood
Crates heaped with cheese and here were pens
Crowded with lambs and kids; all these
Were penned in pens apart; in one
Were kept the eldest, in another,
The younger; in a third, the youngest;
And all the well-wrought vessels used
For milking—pails and bowls—stood full,
Brimming with whey.
And now my men
Besought me eagerly to carry
The cheeses thence, and come again
And loose the kids and lambs and drive them
In haste to our swift ship, then sail
Away o'er the salt sea. But this
I would not grant, though better far
Had I but done so! For I hoped
To look upon this man—he might
Give gifts of friendship. But, alas,

When he appeared, he was to bring
My poor men little joy!
So there
We kindled fire and of that cheese
We made an offering, and ate
Ourselves thereof, and sat and waited
Until at last he entered, driving
His flock before him.
He bore in
Dry wood to cook his meal, a load
Of wondrous weight, and down he flung it
Within the cave, with such a crash
We cowered back with fear and crouched
In the cave's corner. Then he drove
Into that spacious cave the sheep
That he must milk, and left the others—
The rams and goats—without, to roam
The high-walled court.
Then in its place
He set the massive rock that closed
The doorway of the cave: he raised it
Lightly aloft, a weight so vast
That never two and twenty wagons,
Four-wheeled and firmly built, might stir it
From where it lay on earth—so great
That towering crag was that he set
To close his door.
Now sat he down
And milked his sheep and bleating goats
All in due order, and he set
Her young by each. Half the white milk
He curdled and then gathered it
And set it by in wicker baskets;
And half he left there in the bowls
That he might sup thereon. And now,

When he had labored busily
And finished every task, he stayed
And kindled up the fire and saw us
And asked us:
'Strangers, who are you,
And whence do you come sailing hither
Over the sea's wet ways? What errand
Can bring you hither? Or perchance
You wander purposeless, like robbers
Who rove the seas and venture life
To bring to strangers in far lands
An evil fortune.'
So he spoke,
And at his words our hearts within us
Were crushed and broken, for we feared
The man's deep voice and monstrous body.
Yet I spoke up and answered, saying:
'We are Achæans come from Troy:
We wander blown by every wind
Over the sea's great gulf, still striving
To reach our homes, yet ever go
On alien ways, by paths we never
Have willed to travel—so it pleases
Zeus to decree. We boast we once
Were warriors under Atreus' son,
Great Agamemnon, he whose fame
Is highest under heaven—so great
A city he laid low, so many
The men he slew there. Now we come
Hither before your knees to pray you
Give welcome to your guests and grant us
Such gifts as guests should have. Respect,
O mighty one, the gods, for we
Are suppliants, and Zeus avenges
The suppliant and stranger: he

Is god of strangers, watching over
Each worthy wanderer.'
So I spoke,
And pitiless of heart, he answered:
'Stranger, you either are a fool
Or come from a far land, to bid me
Fear or beware the gods! We Cyclops
Fear not your ægis-wielding Zeus
Nor any god above. For we
Are mightier far than they. I would not
Show mercy to your men or you
To shun the wrath of Zeus, nay, never
Unless my own heart bade. But come,
Tell me, where left you your good ship
When you came hither? Was it near
Or at the land's far end? Nay, tell me,
For I would know.'
So asked he, striving
To trap the truth from me, but caught not
My tried mind unaware. So thus
With crafty words I spoke:
'The god
Who shakes the earth, Poseidon, broke
My ship asunder, for he drove her
Upon the cliffs that line your land
And dashed her on the rocks. A tempest
Had blown us in from sea and I
And these my comrades here but barely
Escaped sheer death.'
So I replied.
He, cruel-hearted, made no answer,
But springing up, reached forth his hands
And seized my comrades. Two at once
He snatched up in his grasp and dashed them
To earth like helpless puppies. Forth

The brains flowed, moistening the ground.
Then limb from limb he tore their bodies
And made his meal, devouring them
Savagely as a lion bred
Among the mountains. Naught of them
He left uneaten—flesh or entrails
Or marrowy bones. And we cried out
In lamentation and uplifted
Our hands to Zeus, to see a deed
So horrible. Numb terror laid
Hold on our hearts.

And now the Cyclops,
When he had filled that monstrous belly
With flesh of men, and followed this
With draughts of unmixed milk, lay stretched
Full length upon the cavern floor
Among his flock.

And now I formed
This plan within my daring heart—
To venture nearer and to draw
My keen sword from my thigh and thrust it
Deep in his breast, straight to the spot
Where lay his liver, feeling first
To seek the place; and yet a thought
Withheld me, for we all, each man,
Must then have met sheer death; for never
Could our strength stir from that high door
The massive stone he set there. So
Lamenting there we sat and waited
The sacred dawn.

And when the dawn
Came, rosy-fingered, then once more
He kindled fire and milked his flock
Of wondrous sheep, in order due,
Setting her young by each; and now

When he had labored busily
And finished every task, he seized
Once more upon two men and made
His morning meal. And after this,
His breakfast done, he drove away
His goodly flock, moving with ease
The mighty door-stone thence, then set it
In place as lightly as a man
Would set the lid upon a quiver.
So with a mighty whoop the Cyclops
Went driving his fat flock away
Off to the mountains.

There he left me
Pondering evil—how I best
Might find revenge, if but Athene
Would hear my prayer. And this plan seemed
Best to my mind at last:
There lay
Close by the pens, a mighty staff
Cut by the Cyclops. Olive wood
It was, still green, for he had cut it
To use when it had dried: it seemed,
As we stood gazing, the great mast
Of some broad ship of twenty oars,
Laden with cargo, a black ship
That sails the great gulf of the sea,
So long and thick it seemed. So there
I took my stand by it and cut
A fathom's length away, and this
I gave my men and bade them shape it.
They made it smooth, while I stood by
And brought it to a point and charred it
In glowing fire; and then I took it

And hid it in the dung that lay
In heaps about the cave.
I bade then
My company cast lots to see
Which men of them would dare to join me
And lift that stake and bore it deep
Into his eye when gentle slumber
Should come upon him. And the lot
Fell on the four I should have chosen,
And I myself became the fifth
To share the venture.
And now came
The Cyclops home at evening, herding
His well-fleeced flocks. Straightway he drove
Into that cavern, one and all,
His goodly flocks, nor left he any
In the wide court without. He felt,
Perhaps, some sense of coming evil;
Perhaps some god had warned him. Next
He set in place the massive door-stone,
Lifting it lightly, and sat down
And milked his sheep and bleating goats
All in due order, and he set
Her young by each; and when at last
With busy labor he had finished
His every task, then once again
He seized on two of my companions
And made his evening meal.
And now
I stood before him, and thus spoke,
The while I held forth in my hands
An ivy bowl, filled with dark wine:
'Here, Cyclops, take this wine, and drink
After your feast of human flesh,
And learn how good a drink we kept

Hidden within our ship. I brought it
An offering to you, in hope
You might have pity on my sorrows
And help me home. But you, alas,
In rage exceed all patience! Madman!
How shall there ever come hereafter
Another stranger here to seek you
From any land on earth, if you
Thus scorn all human laws!'

So said I.
He took the wine and drank it. Vastly
That sweet drink pleased him. And again
He begged of me:

'In goodness give me
Yet more, I pray. And tell me now
Your name, and quickly! I will give you
A gift to make your heart rejoice.
Indeed the Cyclops' fertile fields
Yield noble wine from mighty clusters,
And Zeus sends rain to speed their growing,
But this you give me is a cup
Of nectar and ambrosia mingled.'
So spoke he, and once more I bore him
That glowing wine. Aye, thrice I bore it
And gave it him, and thrice in folly
He drained it off. Then when the wine
Had stolen round his wits, I spoke
And said in honeyed words:

'O Cyclops,
You ask my far-famed name, and this
I now will tell you. Give me therefore
The stranger's gift, as you have promised.
My name is Noman; aye, and Noman
My father and my mother called me
And all my comrades.'

So I spoke,
And he with cruel heart replied:
'Noman, of all his company,
I shall eat last; and all the others
I'll eat before him. This shall be
My gift to you—my guest.'
So spoke he,
Then down he sank and on his back
Lay flat, his thick neck bent aside,
And from his throat there poured forth wine
And fragments of men's flesh, for drunken
With wine, he vomited.

And now
Deep under heaped-up coals I thrust
That stake till it grew hot, and stirred
The courage of my men with speech
Lest one of them should shrink with fear
And fail my need.
And now that stake
Of olive wood, green as it was,
Was ready to burst forth in flame,
All glowing with fierce heat. I drew it
Forth from the fire, while round about me
My men stood ready. Then—for surely
Some god had breathed into our hearts
High courage—they laid hold upon
That sharpened olive stake and thrust it
Deep in his eye, the while above them
I leaned upon its top and turned it
As one who with an auger bores
A great ship timber. Those below him
Twist it by thongs on either side,
And still it ever turns unceasing.
So holding that huge stake of wood

Deep in his eye, we kept it turning.
Round that hot brand, forth poured the blood;
And round it all his brows and lashes
Were singed off by the blast that came
Out of that burning eye. Its roots
Seethed in the fire. As when a smith
Dips a great axe or adze in water
To temper it, and loud it hisses—
For so steel gets its strength—even so
His eye hissed round that olive stake.
And loud his cry and terrible
Till the rocks echoed and we fled
Away in fear. Then from his eye
He wrenched away that stake, thick clotted
With his own blood and raging hurled it
Out of his hands. Then loud he shouted
To all the Cyclops who dwelt round him
In caves upon the windy heights.

They heard his shout and straggling gathered,
One here, one there, from every side,
And standing all about his cave
They asked what grieved him.
'What can ail you,
O Polyphemus, that so loudly
You cry out in the heavenly night
And keep us sleepless? Is some man,
Some mortal, driving off your flocks
Against your will; or is some man
Now slaying you by force or cunning?'
And thus in answer from his cave
Spoke mighty Polyphemus:
'Friends,
Noman is slaying me by cunning,
Nor uses force at all!'

And they
With wing'd words thus replied:
'Since no man
Now does you violence, while you
Are there alone, this illness sent
By mighty Zeus, no man may shun
In any way. But pray you now
To your great father, Lord Poseidon.'

So said they and then went their way.
And in my heart I laughed to think
How with that name and my shrewd plan
I had deceived them.
But the Cyclops,
Groaning in agony and anguish,
Went groping with his hands, and lifted
The great rock from the door and there
He sat athwart the doorway, stretching
His hands, to catch, if it might be,
Any who sought to pass the door
Among the sheep; for in his heart
He hoped that I might prove so foolish
As thus to venture. But I still
Sat planning how to bring this peril
To a good end and win us all—
My men and me—escape. Full many
The plan and trick I fashioned, striving
For life itself, for great the peril
And close at hand. And at the last
This, as I deemed, was of them all
The wisest plan.
There in the cave
Were well-grown rams of thickest wool,
Fair beasts and great, and dark of fleece.

These silently I bound together
With twisted willow withes, whereon
The Cyclops slept, that savage monster
Who knew no law nor right. I bound them
By threes together and the midmost
Bore under him a man; the others,
One on each side, were to conceal
And save my comrades: so there went
A man to each three sheep. And I,
Myself, now seized upon a ram,
The best of all that flock, and grasped
His back from underneath, and lay
Beneath his shaggy belly; there
Twisting my fingers deep within
That wondrous fleece, I hung, face upward,
With steadfast heart. And so, lamenting,
We waited sacred dawn.

And now,
When earliest dawn came rosy-fingered,
Then forth the rams went to the pasture,
But all the unmilked ewes went bleating
About their pens with swollen udders.
Their lord, though torn by cruel pain,
Yet, ere each ram passed, made him stand
And felt along his back. He guessed not
In his dull mind, that there beneath
Those fleecy breasts, were bound my men.

Now to the door, last of them all,
The great ram slowly came, weighed down
With heavy fleece and with the burden
Of me and my shrewd plans. Upon him
The mighty Polyphemus then
Laid searching hands, and said:

'Dear ram,
Why do you cross the cave so slowly,
Last of the flock? Till now, you never
Lagged thus, but ever first of all
Sped forth with mighty strides to crop
The soft bloom of the grass, and ever
Were first to reach the running waters,
And first, when evening came, to long
To turn back home. And yet you now
Come last of all. Surely you sorrow
Over your lord's lost eye! A villain
Has quenched its sight—he and his crew
Of wretched fellows, mastering
My wits with wine, this fellow Noman!
Not yet, I say, has he escaped
The death that waits him. Would but you
Could know my thought and had the power
To speak in words and let me know
Where he is skulking from my wrath!
For I should smite him down and dash
His brains about the cave—here, there,
Aye, on the ground! By such a deed
My heart might find some ease from all
The evils that this worthless Noman
Has brought upon me.'
So he spoke,
And sent the ram forth through the doorway.

And now, when we were safe outside
That cavern and its yard, I loosed
My grip upon the great ram's fleece
And then unbound my men in turn,
Setting them free. And then in haste
We drove that flock before us—sheep
Most rich in fat, most long of stride—

And yet we often turned our heads
To glance behind us ere we came
Safe to our ship. Welcome indeed
We were to our dear comrades, snatched
From death itself; and yet they wept
Lamenting those we lost. But this
I would not suffer, but forbade,
With lifted brows, all lamentation,
And bade them quickly bear aboard
Into the ship those many sheep
So fine of fleece, and sail away
Across the salt sea waves. And they
Went then aboard and took their seats
Each in his place, and smote with oars
The whitening sea.

And now, when yet
A shout might reach the land, I called
To Cyclops, taunting him:

'O Cyclops,
You were not, then, to find that man
A helpless weakling—him whose men
You ate there in your hollow cave
With might and cruel strength. For surely
These evil deeds of yours are doomed
To overtake you. O mad fool
Who felt no shame, but must devour
Your guests in your own home! May Zeus
And all the other gods send vengeance
Upon you for such deeds!'

So spoke I,
And he in heart grew angrier yet
And tearing off a hill's great summit,
He hurled it. And it fell beyond
Our dark-bowed ship: the sea surged high
As that great rock crashed down. A wave

Came rolling back, a mighty billow
Out of the deep, and swept our ship
In toward the land. Swiftly I grasped
A great pole in my hands and thrust
The ship from shore and bade my men,
Nodding my brows, fall to and pull
Their best upon the oars and flee
Out of that danger; and they all
Bent to their oars.

But when we now
Were twice as far from shore as we
Had been before, once more I called
Unto the Cyclops, but my men
With pleading words came all about me
And begged me stay:

'Why, like a madman,
Will you enrage this savage monster
Who made but now so great a cast
He drove our ship, then far at sea,
Back to the land. We thought that we
Were lost indeed there. Had he heard
A man of us but stir or speak,
He would have shattered all our heads
And our ship's timbers, too, so rugged
A rock he would have cast, so strongly
He sends it on its way!'

So spoke they.
But did not move my lordly spirit,
And once again with angry heart
I called back, saying:

'If, O Cyclops,
A mortal man shall ever ask you
How it befell your eye was blinded
So hideously, then answer thus:
It was Odysseus blinded you,

Taker of Troy, Laërtes' son,
Who dwells in Ithaca.'
So spoke I,
And with a groan he spoke and answered:
'Alas, for now are come upon me
The ancient oracles. A prophet
Once dwelt here, a great man and good,
And he foretold me everything
That time should bring to pass—that I
Should lose my sight here at the hand
Of one Odysseus. But I ever
Watched for the coming of a man
Tall, handsome, armed with wondrous strength;
And now this little worthless fellow
Has robbed me of my eye by craft,
First mastering me with wine. Yet now
Come hither, O Odysseus, come!
For I would give my guest his gifts
And would implore the far-famed god
Who shakes the shores to give you help
Upon your way. I am his son:
He owns himself my father. He,
And he alone, can make me whole
If so he will, but this no other
Can do, no other of the gods
On high or mortal men who perish.'

So spoke he and I answered thus:
'Would I could be as sure that I
Could strip you bare of soul and being,
And send you to Death's house, as I
Am sure of this:—that none shall ever
Restore your eye, not even he
Who makes earth tremble!'

So I spoke,
And he with hands upraised in prayer
To starry heaven, thus besought
The lord Poseidon:
'Hear me now,
Thou dark-haired god who mak'st earth tremble!
If I be verily thy son
And thou wilt own thyself my father,
Grant that Odysseus, he who took
The towers of Troy, come never home.
Yet, should it be his fate to see
His friends once more and come at last
To his good house and native land,
Late may he come, in evil fortune,
With loss of all his men, and borne
Within a stranger's ship, and meet
In his own home affliction.'
So
He spoke in prayer, and to his words
The dark-haired god gave ear.
Once more
He stooped and lifted up a rock
Far greater than before, and swung it
And summoned all his monstrous strength
And hurled it. And it fell behind
Our dark-bowed ship and barely missed
The rudder's end. Up surged the sea
As that huge rock came down: the wave
Drove us upon our way and toward
The farther shore.
And so we came
Back to the isle where our good ships
Were lying side by side, and here
Beside them sat our comrades weeping
And watching for our coming. Quickly

We drew our ship ashore, far up
Beyond the breaking of the seas,
And brought, then, out our hollow ship,
The Cyclops' sheep ashore and justly
Divided all that no man lacked
His equal portion. To myself
In special honor as my share
Out of that flock, my mailed companions
Gave the great ram. And there I slew him
Upon the shore, burning the thighs
In offering to cloud-hidden Zeus,
Great son of Cronus, lord of all.
He heeded not my offering
But planned instead that all should perish—
All my good ships and all my comrades
Trusted and true.

So all that day
Until the sun went down, we sat
And feasted there on meat in plenty
And pleasant wine; and when the sun
Went down and darkness came upon us,
There slept we by the breaking sea.
But when the earliest dawn appeared
Rose-fingered, then I roused my men
And bade embark and loose the cables.
Then quickly they embarked and took
Their seats upon the thwarts, in order,
And smote with oars the whitening sea.
So sailed we on with aching hearts,
Glad we were saved from death, yet sad
To think how our dear comrades perished.

BOOK TEN

AND NOW WE CAME UNTO THE ISLE ÆOLIA. HERE ÆOLUS, DEAR TO THE DEATHLESS GODS WAS DWELLING.
His island floated on the deep,
And round it rose on every side
A brazen wall unbreakable,
In sheerest cliff. And here were born
Twelve children to him; six were daughters,
And six, grown sons. And these beside
Their father and their honored mother
Sit at unending feast. Before them
Are set fine foods innumerable,
And all day long the house is fragrant
With steam of feasting, and reëchoes
With music to its gates. At night
They sleep beneath soft coverings
In smooth-strung beds.

And now we came
To this their city and fair mansion,
And here a month he made me welcome
And questioned me of all: he asked
Of Ilium and the Argive ships,
And the Achæans sailing homeward,
And I of each, in order due,
Told him the tale. But when I asked him
Which way to sail for home, and prayed him
To aid me on my road, naught then

Did he refuse me, but was ready
To help me onward. For he gave me
A sack, the whole hide of an ox
Nine winters old. In this he tied
The roaring winds from every quarter,
For mighty Zeus had made him keeper
Of all the winds, to still or rouse them,
Even as he would.
This sack he gave me
To carry in my hollow ship:
A shining cord of silver bound it
That not a breath could pass. And with me
He sent a fair west wind to bear
My ships and men along. Far other
Must be our journey's end, alas,
For through our own rash deed we came
To utter ruin.

Thence we sailed
Nine days, both day and night, and spied
On the tenth morning, plain before us,
The fields of our own land, so near
We saw men tending fires.
That instant
Upon me, worn with weariness,
Sweet sleep seized suddenly, for ever
In my own hand I had held fast
The corner of the sail, nor dared
Entrust this charge to any other
Of all my men, for I would quickly
Come to my own dear land.
But now
As I lay slumbering, my men
One with another spoke, and whispered
That what I homeward bore was treasure,

Silver and gold, gifts given me
By noble Æolus. For one,
With meaning glances to his neighbor,
Would say:
'Ah me, how strange it is
That wheresoever this man wanders,
In every land and every city
He gets from all men love and honor!
A fine big treasure this he carries
From plundered Troy, while we, alas,
Who labored on the same hard road
Sail home with empty hands. Nay, come now
And quickly! Let us see what lies
Hid in this sack—what gold, what silver!'
So spoke they, and their evil plotting
At last prevailed. They loosed the cord;
The sack was opened. From it burst
The bound winds, all, at once. Down swirled
A swooping gust and swept them seaward
Far from their own dear land, lamenting.

Then I awakened. In my heart,
Though free from blame, I wondered whether
It were not best at once to leap
Forth in the sea and so to perish,
Or whether I should yet remain
Among the living and endure.
Yet I remained there and endured,
Laying me down within my ship,
My mantle round my head.
So we
And all our ships once more were driven,
Swept back by stormy blasts, the while
My men lamented, to the island
Of Æolus.

Thither we came
And went ashore, and here my men
Drew water, and they made them ready
By the swift ships a hasty meal.
And then, when we had satisfied
Our need of food and wine, I chose me
A herald and a man to follow,
And forth we went to seek the famed
Palace of Æolus. We found him
Sitting at feast, and there beside him
His wife and children. And we entered
Into his house, and by the pillars,
We sat us down as suppliants
Upon his threshold.
In amazement
They saw us, and they asked:
'How came you
Thus here again, Odysseus? Tell us
What evil power of the gods
Has wrought against you? For we sent you
Safe on your way with every care
That you might reach your land, wherever
Your heart's desire might lead.'
So said they,
And I with sorrowing heart replied:
'My men turned utterly to evil,
And cruel sleep betrayed me. Friends,
Help now, for you have power!'
So said I,
Beseeching with soft words. But they
All sat in silence. Then the father
Answering, spoke:
'Hence quickly! Get you
Out of this island, man most luckless
Of all men living. Heaven itself

Forbids we shelter here or help
Upon his way a man so hated
By the blest gods. Hence! for it was
The hatred of the gods that brought you
Back to this island!'
So he spoke,
And sent me from his house lamenting.

Thence on we sailed with aching hearts,
And each man's soul was spent with toiling
Hard at the oar, a toil we owed
To our own folly, but no wind
Now came to help us.
So we sailed
Six days, both day and night. At last,
Upon the seventh day, we came
To lofty Lamos, great of gates,
The Læstrygonians' city. There
The shepherd who leads home his flock
Can meet and greet the man who leads
His flock from fold, and he calls back
An answering greeting. In that land
A man who needs no sleep might earn
A double wage by herding kine
And keeping silvery sheep, so close
The pathways of the day and night
Lie side by side.
And now we entered
That famous harbor. All about it
Continuous and lofty ran
Steep cliffs on every hand. Two crags
Pushed boldly forth and faced each other
Across the harbor mouth, and narrow
The way between.

Into that harbor
All brought their curve-prowed ships. They lay there
Close anchored in that hollow harbor,
Where ne'er came rolling any wave
Or great or small: for shining calm
Dwelt there unceasing.
I made fast
My own black ship, moored all alone,
Outside the harbor, by the point
That jutted farthest, and I carried
My cables to the rocks. Then climbing
The rocky summit, I stood gazing,
But nowhere saw the work of man
Or trace of cattle, only smoke
Uprolling o'er the land. I sent
Two of my comrades, then, to find
What men that live by bread might dwell
In this strange land. I sent forth two,
With them a third, a herald. These
Passed from the ships and went their way
Along the level road that carts
From the high mountain peaks would follow
When bearing wood to town.
They found
Close to the town a maiden come
To carry water, a strong maiden
And stately, daughter of the king,
Antiphates, the mighty lord
Of Læstrygonia; and thither
She came to that clear stream, for ever
The people of that town came forth
To draw them water there. So they
Drew near and spoke to her, and asked
Who there was king and what the land

O'er which he ruled. She straightway showed them
Her father's high-roofed house.
And so
They came to his famed hall, and entered,
And found within a woman, monstrous
As any mountain peak. They shrunk
In terror at the sight; but she
Cried loudly on her lord, the noble
Antiphates, and called him thither
From the assembly. Horrible
The end that he then brought upon
My poor companions. Instantly
He snatched up one of my poor fellows
And made his meal of him. The others
Fled thence in haste and sped away
And reached the ships. Thereat he raised
A cry that roused the town, and hearing,
The mighty Læstrygonians,
Not men but giants, thronging came
From far and near. From their high cliffs
They hurled down on our heads great rocks
A man might scarcely lift. Then loud
Rose from the ships dread sounds of evil—
The crash of shattering ships and cries
Of men that perished. And like fishers
That spear for fish, they bore off homeward
Their hideous food.
But while they thus
Within that deep and sheltered harbor
Slaughtered my comrades, I drew forth
My keen blade from my side and with it
I smote asunder the great cables
That held my dark-prowed ship. Then quickly
I called upon my men and bade them
Bend to their oars that we might flee

Out of this peril. And they all
In dread of death tore up the water,
And gladly from that jutting headland
My ship sped forth to sea. The others—
My other ships and all my men—
Utterly perished. Thence we sailed
With aching hearts, rejoiced that we
Ourselves escaped from death, yet sad
At loss of our dear comrades.
Now
We reached the isle Ææa. Here
Dwelt fair-haired Circe, a dread goddess
Who speaks with mortal men. And hither
We brought our ship to land in silence
And found a sheltered mooring place
In quiet waters; some god surely
Had been our guide. And here we landed
And waited here two days and nights
Wasting our hearts in weary sorrow.

But when the bright-haired dawn at last
Brought the third day, I took my spear
And my sharp sword, and swiftly climbed
Up to a point of outlook, hoping
I thence might see some work of man
Or catch the sound of speech. So up
I got me to a rugged summit,
And thence I saw through tangled thickets
And woodland, far-off smoke arising
Out of the open land that lay
By Circe's palace. And I pondered
In mind and heart if it were wise
To go and find what lay there, under
That smoke that glowed with fire; and yet

As thus I mused, I found it better
First to go down to my swift ships
Beside the shore, and give my men
Their mid-day meal, then send them forth
To search the land.
But as I went
My way in my despair and neared
My curving ships, some god took pity
And sent, across my very path,
A high-horned stag. Down to the stream
He came to drink, for he had grazed
Up in the woodland, and upon him
The power of the sun lay heavy.
Then, as he left the stream, I smote him
Full in the back and cleft the spine:
The brazen spear pierced through his body,
And in the dust there with a cry
He fell, and life fled from him.
Firmly
I set my foot upon his body
And drew the bronze spear from the wound
And laid it on the ground. Then plucking
Osiers and withes, I wove a rope
A fathom long, all firmly twisted,
And bound that huge beast's feet together
And set him on my neck and shoulders
And toward my black ship bore him slowly,
Leaning upon my spear. For never
With one hand only might I hold him
Upon my shoulders, for that beast
Was huge indeed. And so I cast him
To earth beside the ship, and roused
My comrades, speaking words to cheer them,
Pausing by each in turn:

'Not yet,
My friends, shall we, for all our sorrow,
Go down the way to Death; not yet
Is come our destined day. So now,
While meat and drink are with us still
In our swift ship, let us give thought
To food, before we waste with hunger.'
So spoke I, and they heard my words
And quickly heeded. From their heads
They drew their mantles and with wonder
Stared then to see that stag that lay
Beside the unresting sea, for great
Indeed, that carcass was. And then
After their eyes had had full pleasure,
They washed their hands and made them ready
A noble feast. So all that day
Until the setting of the sun
We feasted there on meat in plenty
And pleasant wine. But when the sun
Went down and darkness came upon us,
We slept there by the breaking sea.

But when the earliest dawn appeared,
Rose-fingered, then I called a council,
And said to all:
'Friends, now we know not
Whither the home of darkness lies
Or whither dawning—where the sun
That shines on mortals passes under
The edge of earth, or where he rises!
So let us ponder now and quickly—
If hope yet lie in any plan!
For me, I see none. For I climbed
A rugged summit and I looked
On all this island. All around it

Lies like a crown in endless circle
The unbounded sea. The land is low
And yet my eyes saw smoke arising
Far-off beyond the woods and thickets.'
So spoke I, and their hearts were broken
To hear my words, for they remembered
The harm the Læstrygonian,
Antiphates, had wrought; and Cyclops,
Savage and arrogant of heart,
Eater of men! Loud was their weeping
And grievous were their tears, and yet
No help came from their weeping.
Straightway
I parted all my mailed companions
Into two bands, and over each
I named a leader. I led one,
Noble Eurylochus the other.
Quickly we cast in a bronze helmet
The lots and shook them, and forth leaped
The lot of bold Eurylochus;
So on his way he went and with him
His weeping comrades, two and twenty,
While all we others there were left
Behind lamenting.
Now they came
To Circe's palace, and they found it
Deep in a glade, of polished stone,
Sheltered on every side. About it
Went roaming mountain wolves and lions,
Charmed with her evil potions. These,
When they beheld my men, attacked not,
But stood upright and fawned on them
In friendship, wagging their long tails,
Like dogs that all assemble, fawning
About their master when he comes

Forth from the feast with pleasant morsels.
So round my men these beasts came fawning,
Lions, and grim-clawed wolves; and they
Trembled with terror to behold
These dreadful beasts.
And now they stood
Before the threshold of the goddess
Of lovely tresses, and they heard
Circe within, as sweetly singing
Before her great immortal loom,
She walked, and wove her web, a web
Such as the gods weave—delicate,
Shining and beautiful.
And now
Polites spoke to them, a man
Ever a leader, whom I loved
And trusted most of all:
'Hark, friends—
Within the house there goes one walking
Before a mighty loom and singing
So sweetly that the very pavement
Reëchoes with her voice—I know not
If this be god or woman. Come,
And call her quickly!'
So he spoke.
They cried and called her. And she swiftly
Cast wide the shining doors and came
And bade them in. And they, in folly,
All followed in together. One,
But one, Eurylochus, remained,
For he feared treachery.
She led them
Into the house and gave them seats
On chairs and couches, and she fed them
With cheese and meal and golden honey

All stirred with Pramnian wine. Strange potions
Of dreadful power she had mingled
Into that food, to make them wholly
Forget their own dear land.
And straightway,
When she had given this food, and they
Thereof had tasted, with her wand
She smote them, and then shut them all
In pens among the swine, for swine
They were become in head and voice,
In form and bristles—yet within them
Their minds were as they were before.
So there they all among the swine
Were penned lamenting, and she fed them,
And cast them acorns, chestnuts, cornel—
Such food as men are wont to feed
The swine that sleep in mire.

Meanwhile
Eurylochus was come again
In haste to my swift ship to tell me
The foul fate of my men. No word
For all his striving, passed his lips,
So smitten was his soul with sorrow:
Tears filled his eyes; his heart was yearning
To weep its grief. But when, amazed,
We questioned him, at length he spoke,
He told us how on his companions
Had come destruction:
'As you bade us,
We went, O great Odysseus, inland,
Up through the thickets till we found,
There in a glade, a dwelling fair,
And in the house there went one walking

Before a mighty loom and sang
Sweet music: whether god or woman
We knew not, and we called to her.
And she came quickly and cast wide
The shining doors and bade us enter.
And they all followed her, in folly,
Yet I remained, for I had fear
Of treachery. And they are vanished—
All gone and utterly: not one
Came forth, though long I sat there waiting.'
So spoke he. And thereat I slung
My brazen sword, long, silver-studded,
About my shoulders, and I girt
My bow in place and bade him lead me
The way that he had come.
But he
Besought me, while with both his hands
He clasped my knees:
'Do not, O master,
Thou heaven-descended, drive me thither
Against my will, but leave me here.
For well I know you shall yourself
Never return alive, nor save
One man of those you lost. Far better
Swiftly to flee away with those
Who yet are left us, so escaping
Our day of evil.'
So he spoke,
And I replied and said:
'Remain, then,
Eurylochus, if so you will,
And eat and drink. But I must go,
For now the voice of duty calls me,
And mightily.'

I spoke, and inland
I passed then, leaving ship and sea.
But as I went my way and traversed
Those haunted glades and still drew nearer
The stately palace wherein dwelt
Circe with her strange spells, there came
To meet me, Hermes, golden-sceptered.
He seemed a mortal youth, new-bearded,
Just of the age when youth is fairest.
He took my hand and hailed me:
'Whither,
O man ill-fated, are you going
Over these hills alone! You know not
The perils of this place. Your comrades
Lie yonder, helpless, penned together
In Circe's house all shut like swine
In her strong sties. And you are come
To set them free? Never, I tell you,
Shall you return yourself—nay, here
You shall remain, as they. Yet, come,
I will preserve you from this peril
And save you! Look, take now this herb
Of magic power: with this in hand
Go on to Circe's house, for this
Shall ward off from your head the day
Of destined evil. I will tell you
All Circe's deadly wiles. She first
Will mix sweet thickened wine, and cast
A magic drug therein; and yet
She shall not charm you thus. This herb
I give you now has power to stay her.
Nay, I will tell you all:—when Circe
Thrusts toward you her long wand, then draw
Your keen sword from your side. Rush swiftly
Upon her, as you meant to slay her,

And she will yield in fear, and sue you.
Deny her not, that she may free
Your comrades and may make you welcome.
But bid her swear the dreadful oath
Of the immortal gods to plot
No further harm to you, nor weaken
Your might by magic art when you
Lie all defenceless.'
So the god,
Swift-flashing, spoke, and plucked the plant
Out of the ground, and gave it, showing
Its growth and nature. Black it was
At root, yet white as milk its flower,
And Moly the gods call it, hard
For mortal men to dig, but gods
Are able to do all things.
Swiftly
To great Olympus off went Hermes
Up through that wooded isle, and I
Passed on toward Circe's house, and ever
My heart was darkened with foreboding.

And now I stood before the doors
Of that fair goddess. There I halted
And called aloud. The goddess heard me
And swiftly at my voice came forth,
Cast wide the shining doors and called
And bade me enter, and I followed
With aching heart.
She led me in
And seated me upon a chair
Fair, finely carved and silver-studded,
A footrest under it. She mingled
Within a cup of gold a potion
Of sweet and thickened wine, and gave it

And bade me taste. But she had cast
Strange drugs therein, for in her heart
She plotted evil.
When she now
Had given me this and I had drunk it
And yet it charmed me not, then quickly
She smote me with her wand, and spoke
And cried to me:
'Hence, get you now
Forth to your sty and bed yourself
There with your fellows!'
So she spoke,
But I drew swiftly from my side
My sharp sword, and I rushed upon her
As I would slay her. She cried out
Aloud in fear and ran in quickly
Under the blade, and clasped my knees,
And piteously she pleaded with me
In wing'd words:
'Who are you? Whence come you?
What is your land and what your city?
What parents bred you? Wonder fills me,
For you have drunk the magic drink
And yet it charms you not. No man
Ever before like you, defied
My magic power, once he tasted
And it had passed his teeth. Nay, surely
You are Odysseus, he whose way
Is ever-changing, for great Hermes
Of the gold scepter ever told me
That you would sail here, bound from Troy
In your swift ship. Come now, and put
Your sword back in its sheath. We then
May meet in love and friendship, each
Trusting the other.'

So she spoke.
And I replied and said:
'O Circe,
How can you bid me deal with kindness
With you who in your halls have turned
My comrades into swine? You ask me
To show you love and trust, but plan
To work some treachery. But I
Will trust you not, nor do your bidding
Till you, O goddess, will assent
And swear a mighty oath you never
Will plot more harm to me.'
So said I,
And she, as I commanded, swore,
And when she duly had completed
That dread oath to the end, I yielded,
And there abode in friendship.

Meanwhile,
About her palace hall, her maidens
Were busy at their tasks, four maidens
Who ever served her. They were born
Of springs and groves and sacred rivers
That flow down to the sea. One cast
Upon the chairs fair covers—purple,
With linen under it. Another
Set silver tables by each chair
And placed gold baskets there. A third
Mixed in a silver mixing-bowl
Sweet honey-hearted wine and set
Beside it cups of gold. A fourth
Brought water and beneath a caldron
Built up a blazing fire to heat it;
And when it boiled in the bright bronze,
She cooled it to the heart's delight

And bade me sit me in the bath
And poured it forth from the great caldron
On head and shoulders, driving off
The heart-destroying weariness
From every sinew. Then when I
Was bathed and with smooth oil anointed,
She gave me a fair robe and tunic
And led me in, and seated me
In a fine chair, all richly carved
And silver studded, . . . and brought food
And bade me eat.
Yet in my heart
I felt no pleasure, but I sat
Brooding on other thoughts: my soul
Foreboded evil.
And when Circe
Saw that I sat thus, nor reached forth
My hands to take the food, quite lost
In my great sorrow, then she came
And stood beside me and thus spoke
In wing'd words:
'Why sit thus, Odysseus,
Speechless, like one made dumb, consuming
Your soul with sorrow, never reaching
Your hand to food or drink. What—think you
I plan some further plot? Nay, now
You need not fear, so dread the oath
That I have sworn.'

So Circe spoke,
And I replied and said:
'Ah, Circe,
What man whose heart is true, could bear
To taste of food or drink, till he

Had set his comrades free, and seen them
With his own eyes! If in good faith
You speak when you invite me thus
To eat and drink—set free my comrades
That I with my own eyes may see them!'

So said I, and forth Circe went,
Her wand in hand, and opened wide
The doorway of the sties, and forth
She drove them—and they seemed like swine
Nine seasons old. So there they stood
Before her, and she passed among them
And touched them each with some strange ointment;
Then from their limbs off fell the bristles
Her evil potions put there. Men
They were once more, and younger far,
Taller and goodlier to behold.
They knew me and each grasped my hand
And all the longing of their hearts
Broke forth in weeping, till the house
Reëchoed sadly. Even Circe
Herself felt pity, and she stood
Beside me in her godlike beauty
And said:
'Laërtes' godlike son,
Ready Odysseus, go now quickly
To your swift ship beside the sea
And draw her high upon the shore,
And store her gear and all your goods
Within the caves. When that is done,
Come back and bring your comrades with you.'

So said she, and my lordly spirit
Obeyed her words. I went my way

To my swift ship beside the sea,
And there by my swift ship I found
My faithful comrades; bitterly
They wept and poured forth tears. And even
As calves, shut in all day, who see
The cows returning to the farmyard
When they have grazed their fill, and come
Bounding to meet them—for their stalls
No longer pen them—and go leaping
Loud-lowing round their mothers; so
Did these, when they beheld me, weep
And throng around me. In their hearts
It seemed to them they once again
Had reached their own land and the city
Of craggy Ithaca, the home
Where they were born and bred. And weeping
They said in wing'd words:
'Noble master,
We are as glad to see you safe
As if we were ourselves again
In our own Ithaca. But come,
And tell us of our other comrades
And how they perished.'
So they spoke,
And I with soft words answered:
'First
Draw up our ship ashore and lay
Her gear and all our goods away
Within the caverns. Hasten then
And follow, and with your own eyes
Behold, in Circe's sacred hall
Your comrades eating there and drinking
In never-failing feast.'

So said I,
And they obeyed my words; but one,
Eurylochus, refused and strove
To hold his comrades back:
'Poor fools,
Where are we going? Why so eager
For new misfortune? Would you go
To Circe's hall where she may turn us,
Each one, to swine or wolves or lions,
And make us guard her stately hall—
Or deal with us as did the Cyclops,
When our poor comrades sought his courtyard,
And bold Odysseus with them, he
Whose rashness brought them death?'
So said he,
And in my heart I pondered then
Whether to draw my keen sword straightway
From my strong thigh and smite away
His head and dash it in the dust,
Though he was near of kin! But round me
My comrades with soft words all stayed me:
'Nay noble master, let this man
Remain, if you consent, beside
Our ship and guard it. You shall lead
To Circe's sacred house.'
So said they.
So up we passed and left behind us
The ship and shore, and yet we left not
Eurylochus behind us there
By our black ship, but after us
He followed; for he feared my anger.

Circe meanwhile within her house
Had bathed my comrades heedfully,

Anointed them with oil, and dressed them
In woolen cloaks and tunics. There
We found them all at feast together
Within her hall. And when these men
And mine again met face to face
And knew each other, loud they wept
Till the hall echoed. And thus spoke
The goddess standing by me:
'Nay,
Let not this flood of grief wax greater!
Well do I know the sufferings
That you have borne the while you sailed
The thronging deep, and cruel men
Have wrought you harm on shore. But come,
Eat of my food and drink my wine
Until you feel once more the spirit
You felt when first you left your land,
Ithaca's craggy shore! You now
Are spent and spiritless; your minds
Dwell ever on your dreary journey,
Where joy ne'er cheered your hearts, for much
You all have suffered.'
So she spoke,
And our glad hearts agreed. So here
Day after day, the whole year through,
We sat at feast with meat in plenty
And pleasant wine. But when the year
Had gone its way, and all the circle
Of seasons and the months was spent,
And the long days were ended, then
My faithful comrades called me to them
And said:
'Poor spell-bound man, think now
Of your own native land, if ever
You hope that fate may set you free

And bring you back to your fair house
And your own native land.'
So said they,
And my high spirit hearkened. Straightway
I went my way to Circe's room
And at her knees made supplication
In wing'd words, and the mighty goddess
Hearkened my prayer:
'O Circe, grant me
What long ago you promised: help me
To reach my home, for longing stirs me
And all my comrades: their laments
Harrow my heart whenever you
Are not among us.'
So I spoke.
Straightway the goddess answered:
'Son
Of good Laërtes, great Odysseus,
No longer need you here remain
Against your will. But you must first
Perform another journey, going
Down to the house of Death, the home
Of dread Persephone, and there
Question the spirit of Teiresias
The Theban, the blind soothsayer
Whose wisdom still remains his own
Though he be dead. Persephone
Grants him an understanding mind
Among the other dead who flit
Like empty shadows.'
So she spoke.
Then broken was my heart within me.
I sat upon the couch and wept,
And wished no more to live or see
The light of day. But when I had

My fill of tears and writhing sorrow,
Thus spoke I, answering:
'O Circe,
What guide shall lead us on that way?
Never, in his black ship, has man
Sailed to the house of Death!'
So said I,
And thus straightway the goddess answered:
'Grieve not because you have no pilot
To guide your ship. Set up your mast
And spread your white sail to the wind,
And sit you down. The north wind's breath
Shall bear you on your way. And when
Your ship has crossed the Ocean-stream,
Before you there will come in sight
The level shores and sacred groves
Of dread Persephone—tall poplars
And willow showering seed. So here
Bring you your ship to land, where flows
Ocean's deep-eddying stream, but go you
Your way to Death's dank house.
Now hither
The river Phlegethon comes flowing
To join with Acheron, and here
Cocytus meets them, flowing forth
From Stygian waters, and a rock
Arises here and marks the meeting
Of the two roaring streams.
And now,
Great prince, do as I bid. Draw near
This rock and dig a pit hard by it,
A cubit's measure either way,
And round it pour libation. . . . Then
Make vows and pray the powerless dead, . . .

And offer sheep, and bend their heads
Downward toward Erebus, but turn
Your own face from it, looking off
Toward the flowing stream. And thither
Spirits will come in throngs, the souls
Of the departed dead. . . . Draw then
Your keen sword from your mighty thigh
And sit you watchfully, and let not
The powerless dead draw near the blood
Till of Teiresias you learn
What you would know. For quickly then
That soothsayer will come, and he,
O lord of men, will tell you all:
The way to go, the leagues to travel,
And how, across the thronging sea
You yet may reach your home.'
So said she,
And straightway then uprose the dawn
Enthroned in gold. Then Circe clad me
In fair new garments, cloak and tunic,
And she herself put on a garment
Wide, silver-bright, light-spun and lovely,
And placed about her waist a girdle
Golden and fair, and on her head
She bound a veil. Then through the house
I passed and summoned forth my men
Standing by each with pleasant greeting:
'Now sleep no longer, softly breathing
In idle slumber. Rise and follow,
For mighty Circe now has told me
All we must do.'
So I commanded
And their high hearts obeyed my bidding.
Yet I could not lead thence in safety

All my good comrades. There was one,
The youngest of them all, Elpenor,
Not brave in battle nor well gifted
With powers of thought. And this man wandered
Far from the rest and laid him down
High on the roof of Circe's house
To sleep alone there, drunk with wine,
Craving the cool night air. And now
As all the rest arose, he heard
Their speech and trampling, and sprang up
Suddenly in his haste, forgetting
That to descend he first must find
The top of the long ladder. Headlong
He fell then from the roof and sundered
His neck-bone from its joint: his soul
Went down to Death.

And as my men
Set forth upon their way, I spoke
And said to them:

'You think you now
Are setting forth for home and seeking
Your own dear land. Another road
Circe now bids us go, the road
Down to the house of Death, the home
Of dread Persephone.'

So said I,
And broken were their hearts within them.
Down sat they all, and tore their hair
And loud they wept and wailed, and yet
No help came from their weeping.

Now
While we, to our swift ship returning,
Walked slowly, shedding bitter tears,
Circe had gone before and come

To our black ship and fastened there
A ram and a black ewe, for lightly
She passed, unseen. What mortal eye,
Unless a god so will, shall see him
As to and fro he goes?

BOOK ELEVEN

NOW ONCE AGAIN WE WENT OUR WAY
DOWN TO THE SHIP AND SEA. AND FIRST
WE DREW OUR SHIP DOWN, LAUNCHING HER
Into the sacred deep, and raised
The mast and sail in our black ship
And set the sheep aboard. We too
Then went aboard, with stricken hearts
And shedding many a tear.
And now
There came behind our dark-prowed ship
A favoring wind to fill our sail—
A welcome comrade, sent by Circe,
That fair-tressed goddess of dread power,
Who speaks with mortals. So we trimmed
Our good ship's tackle right, and then
Sat at our ease, while wind and helmsman
Held her course true.
So all day long
Our ship sped on with tightened sail
Over the sea. And now the sun
Sank and the pathways of the deep
Were lost in darkness.
Now we reached
The further shore, beyond the flow
Of the deep Ocean-stream. And here
Lies the Cimmerian land, and here
Their city, shrouded evermore
In mist and cloud.

The blazing sun
Never with his bright beams, looks down
Upon them, not when he ascends
High up in starry heaven, nor when
He turns him earthward, down again
From heaven's summit. Evermore
Over these wretched men lies spread
Deadly unending night.
And thither
We came, and drew our ship to land
And set the sheep ashore. Then onward
We went ourselves, beside the flow
Of Ocean's stream, until we reached
The place foretold by Circe.
Here
Eurylochus and his companion
Held fast the beasts, while I drew forth
My keen sword from my thigh and dug
A trench, a cubit long and wide,
And round about it poured libation
To all the dead. And first I poured
Honey and milk; and next, sweet wine;
Last, water; and then over all
I strewed white meal. And I besought
The strengthless dead with many a prayer,
Vowing that when I came once more
To Ithaca, I then would offer
In my own hall a barren heifer,
The best of all my herd, and heap
The pyre with noble gifts. And next
I offered, to Teiresias
And none but him, the offering
Of a black sheep unspotted, best
In all my flocks. And when I thus
Had with my prayers and vows besought

The nations of the dead, I then
Led up the sheep and cut their throats
Over the trench, and the dark blood
Came pouring forth.
And now drew near,
Thronging from Erebus, the souls
Of the departed dead. And here
Were brides new-wed, young men, and men
Old, worn with toil, and tender maidens
With hearts yet new to grief; and here
Were many wounded with bronze spears—
Men slain in battle, wearing still
Their blood-stained armor. Thus they came
Thick thronging. Round the pit they gathered
On every side, and terrible
Arose their wailing cry. Pale fear
Laid hold upon me. Yet I urged
My men to ply their task, to take
The sheep that lay there, newly slain
By the unsparing blade, and flay them,
And burn their flesh.
And now I called
Upon the gods—on mighty Death
And dread Persephone. I drew
My keen sword from my side, and there
Sat by the trench, nor would I suffer
One of those strengthless dead to draw
Nearer the blood, till I should learn
Teiresias' answer.
First there came
The spirit of my lost companion,
Elpenor. For he had not found
Due burial under earth that lies
Wide to men's feet, for we had left
His body in the house of Circe,

Unburied and unwept, for then
A new task drove us forth.
And I
Wept to behold him and my heart
Was filled with pity, and I spoke
And said thus in wing'd words:
'Elpenor,
How came you hither to this place
Of shadow and dim darkness? Swifter
You came afoot than I came hither
In my black ship.'
So spoke I. Groaning
He answered thus:
'An evil doom
Sent by some god destroyed me thus,
And wine in overmeasure. So,
When high on Circe's house I laid me
Alone to sleep, I never thought
That to descend I first must find
The lofty ladder. From the roof
Headlong I fell and broke asunder
The neck-bone from its joint. My soul
Went down to Death. Now I beseech you
By those we left behind, by those
No more beside us, by your wife,
Your father, he whose care preserved you
When you were young, and by your son,
Telemachus, whom you left lonely
In your own halls—grant what I ask.
Surely I know that when you pass
Hence from this house of Death, you then
Will stay your well-built ship awhile
At the Ææan isle, and there,
O mighty master, I beseech you,
Remember me. So sail not thence

Turning away to leave me lying
Unwept, unburied, lest the gods
In anger for my fate afflict you.
But burn me with my armor, all
That once was mine, and for me heap
There by the foaming sea a mound
To mark where lies a man ill-fated
That days to come may hear my story.
Do this for me, I pray, and fix
Upon my tomb the oar wherewith
While yet I lived, I ever rowed
Among my fellows.'
So he spoke,
And I replying spoke and said:
'Poor hapless man, this for your sake
I will accomplish.'
So we sat,
We two, in piteous speech together,
On one side I, my sword outstretched
Over the blood; while on the other
My comrade's empty image answered
With many a word.
And, after him,
There came the spirit of my mother,
Of Anticleia, who was daughter
Of brave Autolycus, and now
Was with the dead, though she yet lived
When I had left her to go forth
To sacred Ilium. I wept
To see her, and my heart was full
Of pity for her; but though sorrow
Was sore within me, still I stayed her
Nor let her near the blood till I
Had learned Teiresias' answer.

Now
The spirit of Teiresias came,
The Theban. In his hand he bore
A golden scepter, and he knew me
And thus he spoke:
'Why, man ill-fated,
Have you thus left the sun's bright light
And hither come, hither to see
The dead and this dim place where joy
May never dwell? But now, draw back
From the pit's edge, and turn aside
Your sharp blade from the blood, that I
May drink thereof and tell you truly
What shall befall.'
He spoke, and I
Drew back and thrust into its sheath
My silver-studded sword.
And thus,
When he had drunk of the dark blood,
The noble prophet spoke:
'You look,
Glorious Odysseus, for a voyage
Sweet and delightful, but the gods
Shall make it hard indeed. For never,
I think, can you escape the eye
Of him who shakes the earth. For he
Is wroth of heart against you—angry
That you have blinded his dear son.
But though all this be so, you yet
May reach your home, through many perils,
If you are master of your soul
And of your comrades, when you first
Shall bring your well-built ships to land
On the Thrinacian isle, escaping
The dark-blue deep. For on that island

You will see pasturing the cattle
And fat flocks of the Sun, who sees
And hears all things. And if you leave
These all unharmed, and fix your hearts
Upon the homeward way, you yet
May come, though suffering sore perils,
To Ithaca. But if you harm them,
Then naught can I foresee but ruin
For you and ship and men. Nay, though
You should yourself escape, then late,
In evil plight, you shall come home,
With loss of all your men, borne thither
Within a stranger's ship, to find
Affliction in your home, proud men
Devouring in their insolence
The substance of your house and wooing
Your noble wife with gifts.
Yet surely,
If you come home, you shall take vengeance
For their ill deeds.
And when your hand
Has slain these wooers in your halls,
Whether by guile or open battle
With the sharp sword; then go you forth
Bearing a shapen oar. So journey
Until you come to men that know
Naught of the sea, nor eat of food
Seasoned with salt. Nothing they know
Of red-prowed ships, nothing of oars
Well shapen—wings that send the ships
Upon their way. And I will give you
A clear sign you may not mistake:
For when another traveller
Shall meet you, and shall take this oar
You bear upon your shining shoulder

To be a winnowing shovel; there
Set up your oar in earth, and offer
Straightway, unto the Lord Poseidon
Fair offerings—a ram, a bull,
And the sow's mate, a boar. And then
Return you to your home, and there
Offer your sacred hecatombs
To the undying gods that dwell
In the wide heavens, offering
To each in order.
And your death
Shall come upon you from the sea—
The gentlest death of all, to take you
When the soft burden of old age
Weighs heavy on you, and around you
Your people dwell at peace. All this
Shall surely come to pass.'
So spoke he,
And answering him I said:
'Teiresias,
These destinies the gods themselves
Have spun for us. But tell me this
And speak forth plainly: Here I see
The spirit of my mother, now
Among the dead; yet she sits silent
Beside the blood. She has no will
To look on her own son or utter
A word to greet him. Tell me now,
O mighty lord, how may she know
That this is I!'
So spoke I. Straightway
He answered me:
'A simple thing
Is this I tell you. See you fix it
Fast in your mind. Whomever now

Of all these dead from life departed
You let draw near the blood—that spirit
Shall speak and tell you truth, but he
Whom you deny shall turn him hence
Again to his own place.'

So spoke
The spirit of the great Teiresias,
And to Death's house he went, when thus
He had spoken heaven's will.

Yet steadfast
I stood then in my place and waited
Until my mother came and drank
Of that dark blood. And instantly
She knew me and in sorrow spoke,
In winging words:

'My child, how came you
Hither to this dim place of darkness,
You who yet live? Too terrible
These sights for living eyes! From Troy
Have you come hither, in your ship,
With all your men, through weary days
Of wandering? And have you never
Yet reached your Ithaca, or seen
Your wife in your own halls?'

So said she,
And I replying said:

'Dear Mother,
It was my need that drove me hither
Down to Death's house, that I might question
The spirit of Teiresias. Never
Have I come near Achæa, never
Set foot in my own land, but ever
Have wandered far in sore affliction.
So has it ever been since first
I followed mighty Agamemnon

To Ilium rich in steeds, to fight
Against the men of Troy. But come,
Tell me now this and speak forth plainly:
What doom of death that brings long sorrow
Thus mastered you? Was it a sickness
Long-lingering, or did Artemis,
That arrowed goddess, come upon you
With gentle shafts and slay you? Tell me,
What of my father and my son,
Left there behind me? Stands my kingdom
Still in their keeping, or is now
Some alien man already master,
While men are murmuring that no more
Shall I come home again? And tell me,
What of my wedded wife—her plans,
Her counsels? Is she steadfast yet,
Still with her son abiding, keeping
Sure watch o'er all, or is some leader
Of the Achæans now her lord?'

So said I and my noble mother
Straightway replied:
'She still abides
There in your halls, her spirit steadfast,
And all her nights she wastes in mourning
And all her days in weeping. No man
Has seized yet on your noble kingdom,
But still in peace Telemachus
Rules o'er your lands and sits at feast
Among his equals, as a man
Who gives forth laws, may rightly sit,
For all invite him.
But your father
Dwells far upon his farm, nor ever
Now comes he to the town. He cares not

For beds or cushions or soft covers
Or rugs gay-hued. The winter through
He sleeps there in his house, as they
That serve him sleep, beside the fire,
Among the ashes: in poor raiment
He clothes his body. Yet when summer
Is come again and harvest season,
With plenteous yield, then is his bed
Spread where he will, heaped of the leaves
That all along his vineyard borders
Lie strewn upon the ground. And here
He lies in sorrow, and his grief
Grows great within him, ever longing
For your return, and cruelly
Old age comes on him.

And for me—
Thus did I meet with death and perish:
It was not she of the keen aim,
The goddess with the arrows, found me
Within my halls and laid me low
With gentle shafts, nor was it sickness
That came upon me, such as oft
With piteous wasting steals away
The life out of man's limbs. Ah, no—
It was my longing love for you,
Odysseus, for your words of wisdom
And tender love. This snatched from me
Life once so sweet.'

So spoke she. Then
With heart bewildered I would fain
Clasp in my arms that shape, the spirit
Of my dear mother dead. And thrice
I tried—love drove me on—to clasp her,
And thrice out of my arms she flitted
Even as a shadow or a dream.

Bitterly then my sorrow burned
Into my breast, and in wing'd words
I spoke to her:
'Why, Mother, dear,
Will you not wait for me to clasp you
As my heart longs to do, that here
Even in Death's land we may, with arms
Around each other, taste the full
Of grief's cold agony! Or is it
Only your empty semblance, this
That great Persephone has sent me
That I may only in my sorrow
Weep but the more!'
These words I spoke,
And thus my noble mother answered:
'Alas, my poor son, most unhappy
Of all men living. Nay, the daughter
Of Zeus, Persephone, deceives not,
But thus it needs must be with mortals,
With each when he shall die. No more
The sinews then can bind together
The flesh and bones. These the fierce power
Of flaming fire must all consume,
When from the white bones life departs
And forth goes, hovering like a dream,
The fleeting spirit. But now speed you
Back to the light. Yet all these things
Mark well that you may tell your wife
Hereafter of them all.'
So spoke we,
Replying each to each.
But now
Came women, whom Persephone,
The noble goddess, had sent thither,
The wives and daughters, in their day,

Of mighty lords. Close thronging came they
Round that dark blood, and in my heart
I counselled how I best might question
Each in her turn, and this plan seemed
Best to my soul at last. I drew
My keen sword from my mighty thigh
Nor let all drink of that dark blood
Together; singly, one by one,
Each told her lineage, and I questioned
Them one and all.

But when at last
Persephone dispersed afar
These souls of tender women, then
Came Agamemnon, Atreus' son.
In sorrow came his spirit. Round him
Thronged souls of others who had died
In the same house and met their doom.
And he, as soon as he had drunken
Of that dark blood, knew me, and cried
Loud in his grief and toward me stretched
His hands as if to clasp me. Gone
Was all the strength and power that once
Dwelt in those pliant limbs. I wept
Beholding him and all my heart
Was filled with pity, and I spoke
In wing'd words saying:

'Noble son
Of Atreus, mighty lord of men,
O Agamemnon, by what doom
Did death that brings men endless sorrow
Thus master you? Was it Poseidon
That smote you in your ships, arousing
Resistless blasts, or did some foe,
Some fierce men on the land destroy you
As you drove off their kine or flocks

Of goodly sheep, or fought to win
Some city and its women?'
So
I spoke, and answering he said:
'Godlike Laërtes' son, Odysseus,
Crafty in counsel—no, it was not
Poseidon smote me in my ships
With dread resistless blasts, nor was it
Fierce men upon the land that slew me:
It was Ægisthus whose contriving
Brought death and doom upon me—he
And my accursèd wife, for even
In his own home he made me guest
And feasted me, and there he slew me
As one smites down the ox that stands
Feeding within his stall. So died I—
A death most pitiful, and round me
My men fell slaughtered, one by one.
Even as the white-toothed swine men slay
When some rich, mighty lord holds banquet
Or feast or merry drinking. Often
Have you beheld the death of men,
Slain singly or in thick of battle,
But such a sight would move your heart
With yet more pity: round the tables
And wine-bowls we lay strewn: the floor
Ran red with blood.' . . .

And now there came
Achilles' spirit, great Pelides.
He knew me and with wing'd words thus
Sorrowing said:
'Laërtes' son,
Odysseus, shrewd to plan—O madman,
What deed more desperate than this

Will your rash heart devise? How dare you
Come to Death's house, for here dwell only
The dead who know naught—empty shadows
Of men whose toil is done.'

So spoke he;
And answering, I replied:

'Achilles,
Great son of Peleus, mightiest far
Of all Achæans, I came hither
To seek Teiresias, who could tell me
By what wise counsel I might come
To craggy Ithaca. For never
Have I come near Achæa, never
Set foot in my own land, but ever
Have wandered far in sore affliction.
But you—Achilles! There is no man
Of days of old or days to come
Can be called happier. To you
While yet you lived, the Argives gave
Honor as to a god, and now
Even as a god among the dead
You rule, yes, even here. So grieve not
That you are dead, Achilles.'

So
I spoke and straightway thus he answered:
'Nay, great Odysseus, speak not thus
Lightly to me of death. Far rather
Had I be slave to some mean fellow
Of trifling wealth and small estate
Than here be lord o'er all the dead
Whose days are over.' . . .

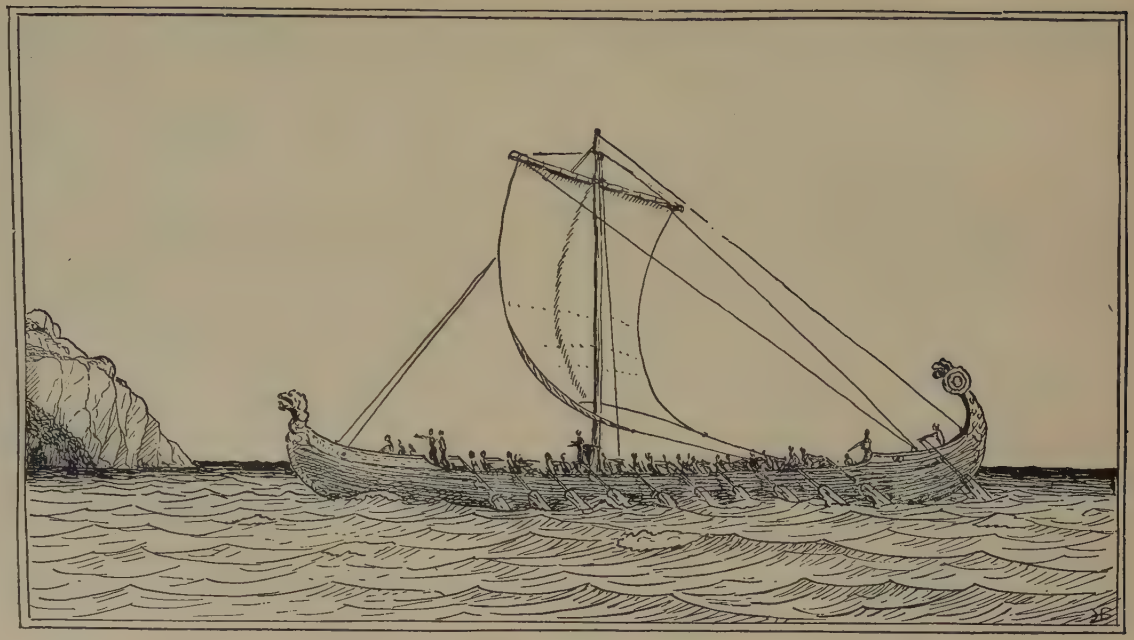
So he spoke,
And off with great strides he departed,
The spirit of the swift Achilles,

Over those meadows all ábloom
With asphodel. . . .

And there too saw I
The might of Heracles, the shape
He wore when mortal. (He himself
Among the immortal gods holds banquet
And has for wife fair-ankled Hebe.)
Round him the clamor of the dead
Rose like the cry of birds that fly
In fear, they know not where, and he
Like the black night, with bow laid bare
And arrow set on string, went ever
Fierce glancing on each side, as one
Ready to loose his shaft. He wore
About his breast a golden baldric,
A belt most terrible, for in it
Were wrought strange tokens: bears, wild boars,
And lions with fierce eyes; and battles
And fights and slayings and foul murders. . . .

Then he departed, and I bided
Yet waiting if there still might come
Some other of the mighty men
That died in days of old.
And many
Of those great men of old my eyes
Might then have seen, had I so willed,
But ere I saw them, thither thronged
The countless nations of the dead
With horrible lamenting. Then
Upon me came pale fear: perchance
Against me there Persephone
Might send from out the house of Death
The Gorgon head of some dread monster.

So straight I turned me to my ship
And bid my men to board and cast
The cables loose, and they in haste
Went all aboard and took their places
Each at his oar, and on its wave
The flowing current bore us thence
Down ocean's stream: with oars at first,
And then a fair wind rose.



THE SWIFT SHIP OF ODYSSEUS

BOOK TWELVE

AND NOW OUR SHIP HAD LEFT THE FLOW
OF THE GREAT OCEAN-STREAM AND ENTERED
THE OPEN SEA'S LONG SWELL, AND SOON
Reached the Ææan isle, the place
Where Dawn the early-born abides
And has her dwelling-place and lawns
For dancing, and here too the Sun
Has his arising. Hither now
We came and drew our ship ashore
High on the sand, and we ourselves
Went up beyond the breaking seas,
And here we slept and lay awaiting
The sacred dawn.

And when the dawn
Rose, early-born, with rosy fingers,
I sent my men to Circe's house
To bear away the lifeless body
Of dead Elpenor. And we quickly
Cut down great trees upon the headland
That jutted to the sea, and gave him
Due funeral rites, with heartfelt sorrow,
Shedding sad tears. And here we burned
The dead man's body and the arms
That once were his, and heaped above him
A funeral mound, and set thereon
A stone in memory, and fixed
Above it, on the mound's high summit,
His trusty oar.

Yet our return
Safe from the home of Death escaped not
The watchful eye of Circe. Quickly
She decked herself, and came to greet us,
And with her all her maidens, bringing
Bread and abundant meat, and wine,
Ruddy, deep-glowing. Then thus spoke
The goddess standing there among us:
'Rash men, who while yet living went
To Death's dark house, twice meeting death
That others meet but once, now come,
Eat of my food and drink my wine
The whole day through, and when the dawn
Brings the new day, sail forth. And I
Will show you by what course to go
And point out every part, lest you,
Luckless for want of counsel, suffer
Ill fate by land or sea.'
So spoke
The goddess, and our noble hearts
Obeyed her bidding. So all day
Till the sun sank we sat and feasted
On pleasant wine and meat in plenty.
But when the sun sank low and darkness
Came over all, my men then laid them
To sleep beside the mooring cables.
But Circe took me by the hand
And led me thence and far away
From all my comrades. Here she bade me
Sit and give heed, while close beside me
She lay reclined, and asked of all
That had befallen. And I told her
Truly of all. Then mighty Circe
Spoke thus, and said:

'Now all these things
Are past and ended. Listen well
To what I have to tell. May heaven
Help you to heed it. You will first
Come to the Sirens, to those women
Who weave a magic spell that masters
All men who hear their song. For he
Who turns him from his way in folly
To hear the Sirens' song—no more
Shall he behold his wife and children
Coming to greet him, glad of heart
That he is home again. They sit,
These Sirens, in a grassy meadow,
And here they sing their clear, sweet song
And weave their spell. And all about them
Lie heaps of gleaming bones; and bodies
Shrivelled, with shreds of skin.
Row swiftly
And drive your ship till safely past.
But first mould honeyed wax and stop
Your comrades' ears, that none of them
May hear that song. Yet if you long
With your own ears to hear it, bid them
First bind you hand and foot and lash you
Upright in your swift ship, your back
Against the mast, with ropes cast round you.
So you may listen with delight
And hear the Sirens' song. Yet first
Command your men that if you beg them
To set you free, they then must bind you
In faster lashings.
When your men
Have urged your ship past these—what road
You next must take, I shall not tell you.
Take counsel with your heart, and choose.

I will make both ways plain. On one
Great rocks o'erhang the sea: against them
Roll in and break the mighty waves
Of dark-eyed Amphitrite. These
The high gods call the Clashing Rocks.
Here naught may pass—nay, not a bird
For all his wings; nay, not the doves
That trembling bear to Father Zeus
Ambrosial food. For when they pass
That sheer smooth crag steals one away,
And, every time, the Father adds
One more to fill their number. Thence
No ship of man escapes, if once
She turn her thither. There together
Forevermore the planks of ships
And bodies of slain men go tossing
At will of rolling waves, and swept
By tempests of dread fire. One ship
Of all that sail the seas, has passed it,
The Argo, known to all men, sailing
Home from Æëtes' land. Her too
Those rollers would have swept to ruin
Upon the mighty rocks, but Hera
Helped her upon her way, so tender
Her love for Jason.

Now there rise
Beside the other way two crags,
And one of these soars high to heaven
With pointed peak. About the summit
A cloud hangs ever, dark and sullen,
Nor ever passes thence. Nor ever
Does the clear light of heaven touch
That peak, in summer or in harvest.
No mortal man might climb it—nay,
Nor find him foothold, though he had

A score of hands and feet, that rock
Rises so smooth, like polished stone
On every side. Midmost the front
Of this great crag, and deep in shadow
There lies a cave. Westward it looks
And toward the land of Death. And thither,
You must, illustrious Odysseus,
Steer with your hollow ship. Yet no man
Though in the strength of youth, could shoot
An arrow from his hollow ship
And reach that cavern's depth.
Within it
Dwells Scylla, ever uttering
Her dreadful yelping cry, her voice
Shrill as a new-born whelp's. There dwells she,
A monstrous shape of evil. No one
Can see that sight unshaken, nay,
Not though a god should face her. Twelve
Her hanging feet are, and six necks
She stretches forth, on each a head
Hideous to see, and in each head
Teeth in three rows, close-set and bristling,
Filled with black death. And there she sits,
Sunk to her middle in that cave,
And stretches forth from that dread gulf
Her fearful heads, and fishes, groping
About the crag, for sharks or dolphins,
Or whatso greater beast her fortune
May make her prey—for many such
The deep-voiced sea-nymph Amphitrite
Has in her pastures. Not one seaman
Can boast his ship has passed her by
Without some hurt. From each dark ship
She ever snatches, with each head,
One man away to death.

'And now,
Odysseus, you shall see, close by,
The second crag. Lower it lies
Yet near the other: one could shoot
A shaft across to it. Upon it
There stands a fig-tree, great and tall
And all in leaf. And under this
The dread Charybdis swallows in
The dark sea-water. Thrice each day
She sends it up and thrice again
She sucks it down, and terrible
That sight to see. I pray that you
May not be there when she is sucking
The water in, for no one then
Could save you from that evil—nay,
Not he that shakes the earth. So turn
Your ship to Scylla's crag and drive her
Swiftly upon her way. Far better
Lose six men from your ship than all
Should die together.'

So she spoke,
And answering her I said:

'Nay, goddess,
Tell but this, and truly: may not
I find me out some way to shun
This dire Charybdis and yet fight
That other from my ship when she
Would make my men her prey?'

So spoke I,
And thus at once the goddess answered,
'Rash you are ever, with a heart
Set upon war and deeds of danger.
Can you not yield, when this must be,
To the immortal gods! This monster
Is not a mortal, but a thing

Of living evil none may slay,
Dread, fierce, unconquerable: no man
May fight against it. Courage here
Avails you nothing. This alone
Is best—to flee from her! What though
You linger by her rock and arm you,
I fear lest then she once again
Stretch forth those fearful heads and snatch
As many more. Nay, rather drive
Full speed upon your way, and call
On Scylla's mother, great Cratæis,
Who brought her forth, a curse to mortals,
And she may stay her if she snatches
A second time.

And now you reach
The island of Thrinacia. Here
Are pastured all the Sungod's cattle
And his fat flocks. For seven herds
Of cattle graze here, seven flocks
Of goodly sheep, and there are fifty
In every flock. They bear no young
Nor do they ever die. Their shepherds
Are goddesses, the fair-tressed nymphs,
Sunlight and Shining Splendor, daughters
Neæra bore the Sun; and she
Their stately mother bore and reared them
And sent them here to this far isle
To dwell and keep here for their father
His flocks and crook-horned kine. If these
You leave unharmed and fix your hearts
Upon the homeward way, you yet
May come, though suffering sore perils,
To Ithaca. But if you harm them,
Then naught can I foresee but ruin
For you and ship and men. Nay, though

Yourself, you yet escape, then late,
In evil plight you shall come home,
With loss of all your men.'
So said she,
And straightway came the dawn, rose-fingered,
And thence the goddess passed away
Up through the island. Then I turned
Back to the ship, and bade my men
Embark and loose the cables.
Quickly
They went aboard and took their seats,
Each man in his own place, and smote
The whitened sea with oars. And now
There came, behind our dark-prowed ship,
A favoring wind to fill our sail,
A welcome comrade, sent by Circe,
That fair-tressed goddess of dread power,
Who speaks with mortals. So we trimmed
Our good ship's tackle right, and then
Sat at our ease, while wind and helmsman
Held her course true.
And now I said,
Sad-hearted, to my men:
'Unfitting
It is, friends, that but one or two
Should hear the sacred prophecies
Of that dread goddess, Circe. These
I now shall tell you, for then either
We die foreknowing what shall fall,
Or we escape and shun the death
And doom that wait us.
This she first
Bids us:—to shun the wondrous Sirens,
With their sweet voices and their meadows
Abloom with flowers. For she bade

That I alone should hear their song.
So bind me fast in bonds—aye, lash me
Upright against the mast, that thence
I may not stir, and cast strong ropes
About me, too. If I entreat you
And bid you set me free, then bind me
Yet tighter than before.'
And so
I told them all she said. And ever
Our good ship sailed on swiftly, nearing
The Sirens' island, for the wind
Blew fair and drove her on. And now
The wind ceased suddenly; there came
A calm without a breath: some god
Laid all the sea to sleep. So now
My men rose, furled the sail, and stowed it
Within the hollow ship, and sitting
In order on the thwarts, they smote
With polished oars the whitening sea.
But I, with my keen blade, now cut
A great round lump of wax, and kneaded
The fragments with my hands, till swiftly
The wax was softened, for my strength
Had warmed it and the shining rays
Of the great Sun, the mighty lord
Who rides on high. With this, I stopped
The ears of all my crew, in turn;
Then fast they bound me, hand and foot
Upright in my swift ship, my back
Against the mast, with ropes cast round me.
Then once again they sat and smote
The foaming sea with oars.
And now,
When we were but so far away
As a man's cry may reach, and lightly

Went driving on—our ship's swift flight,
As close to land she sped, escaped not
The Sirens' sight, and they upraised
At once their clear, sweet song:
'Come hither,
O famed Odysseus, mighty glory
Of the Achæans. Turn your ship
But hither to the shore and hearken
The song we sing, for no man ever
Has steered his black ship hence till he
Has heard the honey-sweet delight
Of music from our lips; then forth
He went upon his way with joy
And fuller wisdom. For we know
All that the Argives and the Trojans
Endured on Troy's wide plains; we know
All that befalls mankind on earth,
The nourisher of all.'
So sang they,
Uttering their sweet song. My heart
Yearned to hear further, and I bade
My men to loose me, and I frowned
My bidding with my brows, but they
Bent busier to their oars, and two,
Eurylochus and Perimedes,
Arose and bound me ever faster
With double lashings. But at last,
When we had passed them and no more
Might hear the song those Sirens sang
And their sweet voices, then my men
Took quickly from their ears the wax
Wherewith I stopped them, and they loosed
The bonds that bound me.

And we now
Had left that isle behind, but soon
I saw the smoke of flying spray,
And huge seas rolling, and I heard
The boom of breakers. From the hands
Of my affrighted men the oars
Fell and trailed idle, roaring through
The running sea beside us. Quickly
The ship lost way and stopped, for now
My men no longer toiled, with hands
Upon the tapered oars. Now swiftly
I passed through all the ship and paused
By each in passing, cheering him
With gentle words:
'We are not, friends,
Untried in danger. This new peril
That lies before us is no greater
Than when the Cyclops caught and held us
Fast in his hollow cave. Yet thence
We found escape—all through my valor
And wit and shrewdness; and I think
That we shall live to tell the tale
Of this day too. But rouse you now.
Do as I bid you. Take your seats
Upon the thwarts and drive your oars
Deep in the sea whose billows roll
So steep against us. We shall see
If Zeus will grant us to escape
Out of this place of death. And you,
Helmsman, I charge you, fix my words
Fast in your heart, for you alone
Hold in your hand the helm that guides
Our hollow ship. Steer boldly forth
Out of these smoking seas and head her
Straight for yon crag, and take good heed

Lest she swing wide and sweep us all
Into sore peril!'
So I spoke,
And they obeyed my order quickly,
And yet I did not speak of Scylla,
That monster none may face, in fear
Lest they from terror drop their oars
And hide within the hold.
Slight heed
I gave to Circe's hard command
I should not arm me. I put on
My glorious armor and I grasped
Two spears in hand and took my station
On the decked prow, for there I thought
I first should see appear this Scylla
That dwelt within the rock, to bring
My men destruction.
And yet nowhere
Could I behold her, and my eyes
Wearied with wandering up and down
That shadowy wall of stone.
So onward
Into that strait we sailed lamenting—
On one side Scylla, on the other
Dreadful Charybdis. Terribly
She swallowed down the salt sea-water
Then vomited it forth till all
Was tossed and whirling like a caldron
Above a raging fire; and spray
Flew high and fell upon the tops
Of the tall crags. But when once more
She sucked the salt sea down, we saw
The whirl's wild depths laid bare; the waters
Roared loud about the rocks; far down

We saw the bottom of the deep
Blackened with sand.
Pale terror then
Laid hold on us: we saw the monster
And feared death near.
And on that instant
Scylla reached forth and snatched my men
Out of my hollow ship—six men,
My best in strength and courage. Lo,
Even as I looked along the ship
To seek them, there I saw, above me,
Their hands and feet as up she swung them
Aloft in air. And loud they cried,
Calling, for the last time, my name,
In agony of heart. And even
As one who fishes from a rock
That juts far out to sea, casts down
His bait to lure small fish and tosses
Into the deep a bit of horn
From kine of his own field—aye, even
As he, if then he takes a fish,
Flings it aloft out of the sea
All quivering, even so she swung them
All quivering up to her high crag.
There she devoured them, one and all,
Before her doorway, while they shrieked
And still stretched out their hands to me
In dying agony. That sight
Was saddest of all sights my eyes
Have ever seen, while through sore trials
I wandered the sea's ways.
So now
We had escaped the Clashing Rocks,
And Scylla and the dread Charybdis,
And quickly came to the fair isle

Of the great Sun. And here were cattle
Goodly and broad of brow, and here
Full many fat flocks of the god
Who rides on high in heaven. I heard
While yet in my black ship at sea
The low of cattle in the stalls
And bleat of sheep. Then to my mind
There came the words of the blind prophet
Teiresias of Thebes, and Circe's
On far Ææa. For they bade,
And often too, that I should shun
This island of the Sun who gladdens
The heart of man. And thus I spoke
With heavy heart, to my companions:
'Now hear my words, my comrades, you
Who have endured such trials. Hearken
While I speak forth the warning words
Of great Teiresias and of Circe
Of the Ææan isle. For these
Foretold that here the worst of evils
Should come upon us. Let us therefore
Drive swiftly our black ship till we
Have left this isle behind.'
So said I,
And hearing this, their hearts within them
Were shattered with despair; and straightway
Eurylochus spoke up and answered
In bitter words:
'Daring, indeed,
You are, Odysseus. You surpass
All men in strength; those limbs of yours
Nothing may weary: nay, you must
Be made of iron altogether!
Yet you forbid us, your poor men,
Weary, outworn with lack of sleep,

To set a foot on land, where, safe
Upon this sea-encircled island,
We might have one good meal prepared us
To eat at ease. But you command us
Forth into swiftly falling darkness
To roam the misted deep. Rough winds
Oft wake with night, the sure destruction
Of ships at sea. Nay, how indeed
Could any man escape sheer death
If suddenly the south wind rose
Or west winds with such gusts as tear
Strong ships asunder, all unheeding
The gods that rule? Nay, let us rather
Obey black night's command and stay
By our swift ship and get us supper,
Then with the dawn embark once more
To sail the open sea.'

So spoke
Eurylochus, and all the others
Assented to his words. Then surely
I knew some power above was plotting
Evil against me, and I answered
In wing'd words, thus:

'You can compel me,
Without a doubt, Eurylochus,
To do your will—I am but one.
But come now. Swear you each and all
A solemn oath that if we find
Here on this isle a herd of cattle
Or flock of many sheep, then no one
Shall, in his wicked folly, slay
A single cow or sheep. Far better
Eat at your ease here the good food
Immortal Circe gave.'

So said I,
And they at once, at my command,
Swore solemnly, and when this oath
Was sworn with all due rites, we moored
Our good ship in that land-locked haven,
Close by sweet waters; and my men
Then left the ship and went ashore
And swiftly made their supper ready.
At last, when hunger had been stayed
By food and drink, then they remembered
And wept their dear companions, those
Whom Scylla had devoured, the men
Snatched from their hollow ship. And on them
Even as they wept, there swiftly fell
Refreshing sleep.

Now, when there came
The third watch of the night when stars
Ride at their highest, Zeus, who guides
The clouds upon their ways, aroused
A raging gale against us, frightful
With gusts of tempest, and enshrouded
The sky and sea with clouds. Thick darkness
Rolled down from heaven. So when dawn
At last came early, rosy-fingered,
We quickly beached our ship and dragged her
Into a hollow cave. Within it
The Nymphs had their fair dancing floors
And seats for gathering. And now
I summoned all my men and said:
'Friends, we have still, in our swift ship,
Both food and drink. So take good heed
You lay no hand upon these cattle,
Lest we should suffer evil. These—
These cattle and these well-fed sheep—

Belong to that dread god, the Sun,
Who sees and hears all things.'
Even so
I spoke, and their proud hearts assented
Hearing my words. But all that month
The steady south wind blew unceasing:
No other wind there ever blew
But south or east.
Now while they yet
Had bread and ruddy wine, my men
Held back and did not harm the cattle,
For still they held life dear. But when,
At last, the food stored in the ship
Was spent and gone, they needs must wander
Throughout the isle to seek wild game
With crooked fish-hooks—fish or fowl,
Whatever came to hand; and hunger
Gnawed at their bellies.
Now it fell
That I went up into the island
To pray the gods, if any god
Would help my homeward way. So onward
I walked into the island's center
Apart from all my men, and here,
Finding me shelter from the wind,
I washed my hands and made my prayer
To all the gods that have their home
Upon Olympus. But they sent
Sweet sleep upon my eyes. Meanwhile
Eurylochus with evil counsel
Thus strove to stir my men:
'My comrades,
Though great your sufferings, yet hear
What I would say. Death in all forms
Is hateful to us wretched mortals,

But bitterest of all is this:
To die of hunger, and so face
Life's ending. Come then, let us drive
The best of the Sun's cattle hither
And slay them as an offering
To the undying gods that dwell
In the wide heaven. And if ever
We come again to Ithaca,
Our own dear land, then let us build
A costly temple to the Sun
Who rides on high, and place within it
Full many a precious gift. If still
The Sun be angry for the sake
Of these, his high-horned kine, and still
Must needs destroy our ship, and all
The gods above agree—then I
With open mouth would face the wave,
Drink death, and cast my soul forth gladly—
Far rather that than thus waste slowly
Away with hunger, here imprisoned
Upon this desert isle.'

So spoke
Eurylochus, and all the rest
Assented, and they straightway went
And from the Sun's herds, close at hand,
Drove forth the best, for these were grazing
Not far from our dark ship—fair cattle
Broad-browed, with curving horns.

Round these
My men now stood and prayed the gods
And from a tall oak plucked soft leaves
To strew instead of meal; no meal
Was left in our good ship. And now
They prayed and cut the victims' throats
And flayed them and hewed off their thighs,

Wrapped these in double folds of fat,
And offered them. They had no wine
To pour upon the sacred fires,
So poured for their libation, water,
And roasted all the entrails. Then,
When they had burned the thighs and tasted
The inner parts, they cut the rest
And roasted it on spits.
Ere this,
Sweet sleep had left my eyes. I rose
And walked back to the ship and shore.
But as I neared the curving ship
There came about me the hot fragrance
Of roasted fat. I groaned, and loudly
Cried to the gods:
'O Father Zeus,
And all ye other gods that dwell
In bliss forever—you have sent
Unsparing sleep to be my ruin
The while my men, alone, have plotted
A deed unspeakable!'
Now came
To the great Sun who rides on high,
His shining shepherdess, in haste,
To tell him we had slain his cattle.
Then thus with angry heart he spoke
To all the gods:
'O Father Zeus,
And all ye other gods that dwell
In bliss forever—grant me now
Vengeance upon these men that follow
Laërtes' son, Odysseus. They,
In insolence, have slain the cattle
That ever were my heart's delight,
Whether I mounted starry heaven

Or turned me down from heaven's summit
To earth again. Nay, if they make
No fit atonement for my cattle,
I will go down to Death's dark land
And shine among the dead.'
Then answered
Zeus, he who guides the clouds, and said:
'O Sun, still shine upon the gods
And on the mortal men that dwell
On fruitful earth. For my bright bolt
Shall smite their swift ship into fragments
Out on the wine-dark deep.'
All this
Calypso of fair tresses told me,
Who heard it, so she said, from Hermes,
The Messenger.

Now when I came
Back to the ship and shore, I spoke
To this man and to that and blamed
Each in his turn. But we could find
No remedy: the kine were dead.
And now the gods showed fearful portents:
The stripped hides crawled, and the dead flesh—
Both raw and roasted—lowed aloud
Like living cattle.
So six days
My trusty comrades ate their fill,
For they had driven forth and slain
The Sun's best cattle. But when Zeus,
The son of Cronus, brought around
The seventh day, the wind that blew
So fierce a tempest, ceased. Then quickly
We went aboard and launched the ship

To the wide sea and raised her mast
And hoisted her white sail.
And now,
When we had left the isle behind us,
And yet no other land appeared—
Nothing but sea and sky, then Zeus,
The son of Cronus, set in heaven
Over our hollow ship, a cloud
Of sullen blue which darkened all
The deep below. And now our ship
Sped on, yet not for long; for swiftly
Out of the west there burst a gale
Shrieking in raging blasts. A gust
Snapped the two forestays of the mast.
Back fell the mast upon the stern,
And all its tackle lay entangled
In the ship's hold. And as it fell,
Striking the stern, it struck the helmsman
Upon the head and broke and shattered
Each bone within. Down he fell headlong,
As falls a diver, from the deck:
His proud soul left his body. Zeus
Now thundered from on high and hurled
His bolt upon the ship. She quivered
Through all her length, struck by the bolt
Of Zeus: a smoke of sulphur filled her;
And straightway from the ship my men
Fell to the sea, and breakers swept them
On past the black ship's side, like sea-birds.
And so now God forever ended
Their hopes of home.
Still to and fro
I hastened through the ship. At last
A great wave tore her keel away
Out of her frame, and on the billows

It floated bare. The mast had broken
Clear from the keel, but still the backstay
Kept it close by. And with this stay,
Twisted of oxhide, I made fast
The two together, mast and keel.
And seated on them both, I drifted
Before that deadly storm.
At last
The west wind that had blown in tempest,
Ceased, but the south wind now arose
And brought my heart new grief, for now
I must remeasure all the way
To where lay waiting that dread peril,
Charybdis. All that night I drifted
And with the rising sun I came
To Scylla's cliff and dread Charybdis.
She, even then, was sucking down
The salt sea-water. I was borne
Aloft, far up to that tall fig-tree,
And there I clung fast, like a bat;
Yet never might I find me foothold
To set my foot on, nor yet climb
Into that tree; for far below
Its roots lay, and its branches spread
Great-limbed and long, and stretched out wide,
Shading Charybdis.
Steadfastly
I clung there till she vomit forth
The mast and keel again. Yet these,
For all my eager watch, came late;
For even when a man arises
To seek his supper, who all day
Has sat in the assembly, hearing
And judging many a bitter quarrel
Of men at strife—even at that hour

There shot in sight, out of Charybdis,
The beams I sought. I loosed my hold
With hands and feet, and fell; and dropped
There in the midst and just beyond
Those massive beams. On these I mounted,
And seated on them, rowed my way
With empty hands. And Zeus, the father
Of gods and men, forbore, nor brought me
A second time in sight of Scylla,
Or I should never have escaped
Death's sudden stroke. So for nine days
I was borne drifting, and the gods
Brought me, on the tenth night, to land—
The isle Ogygia, where dwells
Fair-haired Calypso, a dread goddess
Who speaks with mortal men. She gave me
Kind care and welcome. But why tell
This whole tale over; for I told it
But yesterday, here in this house,
To you and your good wife. I find it
A hateful task to tell all over
A tale once clearly told."

BOOK THIRTEEN

SO SPOKE HE AND THEY SAT IN SILENCE
HUSHED BY THE SPELL THAT LAY UPON THEM
WITHIN THAT SHADOWY HALL. THEN SPOKE
Alcinoüs and answered, saying:
"Since, O Odysseus, you have crossed
My lofty hall's bronze threshold—never
After this day, I think, shall you
Be driven wandering from your way,
Though many an evil till this hour
You have endured. And earnestly
I say this now to every man
Who drinks here daily in my hall
My council's glowing wine and hears
The minstrel's song. Shut in a chest
Lie garments waiting for this stranger,
And gold well-wrought, and many a gift
Besides, that men of our own council
Have given him. Come then, let each
Give him, besides these gifts, a caldron
And a great tripod fair to see.
And let the people then repay us,
For it is hard a man should pay
Without his people's aid."

So spoke
Alcinoüs and all were pleased
To hear his words. Homeward they passed
Seeking their rest. But when there rose
The early dawn, rose-fingered, then
They hastened to the ship and thither

Bore glorious gifts of bronze. And these
Alcinoüs of might divine
Laid carefully away himself
Aboard the ship beneath the benches
Lest they should hinder the crew's labor
When toiling at the oar. And now
Back to Alcinoüs' hall they passed
And joined the feast.
And then before them
Mighty, divine Alcinoüs
Offered an ox to Cronus' son,
To Zeus, cloud-hidden lord of all.
So then in offering he burned
Bits of the thigh, and all men joined
With joy that glorious feast. Among them
Now sang Demodocus the minstrel,
Honored of all men.
But Odysseus
Would ever turn his head to watch
The shining sun and eagerly
Looked for its setting, for he longed
To be upon his way. Like one
Who longs for supper when all day
His wine-red oxen have been drawing
His joined plow through fresh fields—how gladly
He sees the sinking sun that bids him
Seek home and supper, as he plods
His way with weakened knees. So gladly
Odysseus now beheld the setting
Of that bright sun.
Then turned he straightway
To the Phæacians, to those men
That loved the oar, and thus to all,
But chiefly to Alcinoüs, spoke,
And thus he said:

"Alcinoüs,
Mightiest of all men, most renowned,
Now pour libation forth and send me
Safe on my way. To each and all
I say farewell, for now accomplished
Is all my heart's desire—your help
Upon my homeward way, and gifts
Given in friendship. May the gods
That dwell in heaven, grant that these
Bring blessing with them. May I find,
When I come home, my own true wife
Safe among those I love. May you
Remaining here make glad your wife
And all your children: may the gods
Make your life good in all things. Never
May evil touch your home."

So spoke he
And all assented, and they bade
Send the good stranger on his way,
For he had spoken well. Then spoke
Mighty Alcinoüs and said
Unto the herald:

"Mix the bowl,
Pontonoüs, and pass the wine
To all within the hall. Then pray we
To Father Zeus safely to bring
Our guest to his own land."

So spoke he,
And now Pontonoüs arose
And stirred the honey-hearted wine
And served to all in turn. Each poured
From where he sat his due libation
To the immortal gods whose home
Is the wide heaven. Now uprose
Noble Odysseus and he gave

Into Arete's hand the goblet
Of double bowl, and thus he spoke
In wing'd words:
"Fare you well, O queen,
Through all the years till age and death
Come, as they come to all. For now
I go my way. May you dwell happy
In your own home here with your children,
Your people, and your lord and king
Alcinoüs!"

So spoke Odysseus
And forth he passed across the threshold.
And with him great Alcinoüs
Sent forth a herald for a guide
To his swift ship beside the shore;
And after him Arete sent
Her serving women, one to bear
The robe and new-washed tunic, one
To watch the close-shut chest, and one
With bread and ruddy wine.
And now
When they were come unto the shore
Where lay the ship, there found he waiting
His noble company. They took
What men bore thither to them, all
The food and wine, and set it safely
Within the hollow ship. They spread
A rug, then, and a linen sheet
Upon the hollow ship's high deck,
Far aft, that he might slumber there
In sleep unbroken. So he passed
Aboard the ship and all in silence
He laid him down.

And now they sat
Each in his place upon the benches
And cast loose from the pierced stone bollards
The lines that moored them. Then they all
Leaned backward with the stroke and tore
The salt sea with their oars. Then fell
Upon Odysseus' eyes a sleep
Most sweet, and deep, like death.

And now
The ship sprang forward. As four stallions
Speeding across the plain, start forth
Under the lashing whip and spring
Leaping in air, and swiftly run
The race before them: even so
On sped the ship with stern uplifted,
And ever following her there rolled
A great, dark-gleaming wave, the swell
Of the loud-thundering sea. And swift
She sped, and steady. None might match her,
No, not the circling hawk, the swiftest
Of all things winged. So swiftly ran she
Cleaving the swells of sea and bearing
A man with wisdom of the gods,
Whose heart had suffered many a grief
Battling his way through wars of men
And angry waves. Yet here he slept
Untroubled sleep, forgetting all
That he had suffered.

Now arose
The brightest star that earliest brings
Tidings of dawn's first light, and now
The ship that crossed the deep drew near
The land it sought.

There lies a harbor
Within the isle of Ithaca,
A haven that men name for Phorcys,
The old man of the sea. Two headlands
Jut forth, bold cliffs without, yet gently
They slope within. These headlands break
The heavy waves that raging winds
Roll up at sea. Within the haven
The well-oared ships may ride in calm,
Nor need they cables when they once
Have won their landing-place.
A tree
Stands at the haven's head, an olive,
Thick-leaved, and near it is a cave,
A pleasant place of darkness, dear
To the fair nymphs whom men call naiads.
Within are bowls and massive urns
All wrought of stone, and here come bees
To hive their honey; and here stand
Huge looms of stone, whereon the nymphs
Weave them sea-purple robes—a wonder
To look upon. And here run springs
Forever flowing. And two doors
There are for entrance. One door lies
Upon the north; by this door mortals
Descend and enter; but the other,
The southern door, is for the gods.
No man may enter here: this way
Is only for immortals.
Thither
They steered their ship, for of this place
They knew of old. Far up the shore,
Full half her length out of the sea,
That ship sped ere she stayed, such strength

Was in their arms who drove her. Now,
Leaving their well-built ship, they landed,
And first they lifted forth Odysseus
From out the hollow ship, and with him
The linen sheet and bright-hued rug
Whereon he lay. And thus they laid him
Upon the sand, still sunk in slumber.
Then forth they lifted the rich gifts
The leaders of Phæacia gave him
When he set sail for home, for so
Noble Athene moved them. These
They heaped together by the trunk
Of the great olive tree, aside
Out of the highway, lest some man
Should stray there and should do them mischief
Before Odysseus waked. Then homeward
They went their way.

But he, the god
Who shakes the earth, forgot not now
The threat wherewith he long ago
Threatened Odysseus, and he questioned
Zeus of his purpose:

"Father Zeus,
Now shall I nevermore find honor
Among the immortal gods, since men,
Mortals, Phæacians, my own kin,
Refuse me honor. For I said
That, ere he reached his home, Odysseus
Should suffer many an evil—yet
I did not mean that he should never
Come to his home. For you had given
Your promise once, and bowed your head
To bind the promise. Yet these men

Have brought him home in their swift ship,
Asleep, across the sea, and set him
On shore in Ithaca, and given
Rare gifts, such gold and bronze and garments
As he could never have brought home
From Troy itself, though sailing home
Unharmed, with all his spoil."
Then answered
Great Zeus who ruled the clouds:
"Alas,
That you, wide-ruling lord, who shake
The shores of earth, should speak thus. Never
Has any god dishonored you.
Hard would it be to bring dishonor
On you, our eldest and our best!
But, for these men—if any man
Misled by pride or power, deny you
Your due of honor—punishment
Is yours to give, and ever shall be.
So do now what you will, whatever
Your heart may bid."
And thus replied
Poseidon, shaker of the earth:
"I would already, on the instant,
O lord of the dark clouds, have done
As you have counselled, yet I fear
And ever shun your wrath. Yet now
I wish but this—to smite and wreck
A stately ship of the Phæacians
As home she sails from carrying
Some stranger o'er the misted deep,
That henceforth they take heed, and cease
To help men thus. And I would throw
Around their city a great hill
To shut them from the sea."

Then answered
Zeus, ruler of the clouds, and said:
"To me, good brother, this seems better:—
When all the people of that city
Stand watching her as she speeds home,
Then do you turn her, close to land
Into a ship of stone, yet still
A swift ship to the eye, that all
Who see may marvel; and then throw
A mighty hill about their city."
And hearkening these words, Poseidon,
Who shakes the earth, went quickly forth
To Scheria, the Phæacian land
And waited there.

Now homeward came,
Close to the land, and swiftly sailing,
That ship across the deep. And toward her
Stepped forth the shaker of the shores,
And with one sweep of his spread hand
Turned her to stone and rooted her
To the sea's bottom, and so thence
He went his way.
But the Phæacians,
Wielders of long oars, famous seamen,
Spoke with wing'd words to one another,
And one, quick glancing at his neighbor,
Would say:
"What means this? Who has stopped
Our swift ship on the sea? But now
She showed forth plain and clear!"
So said they,
Yet knew not what this was. Then thus
Alcinoüs spoke to them:

"Alas,
Too surely are the oracles
My father uttered long ago,
Come to fulfilment. For Poseidon,
He said, was wroth because we aided
All men across the sea. He said
That some day, as a stately ship
Of the Phæacians sailed back hither
From helping some one o'er the sea,
Poseidon on the misted deep
Would smite her and about our city
Would throw a mighty hill. Even such
The tale that old man told, and all
Is now accomplished. Come, then, quickly
Let all obey my words. No longer
Let us give help to men that come
Here to our city. Let us, too,
Offer Poseidon twelve choice bulls
That he may pity us, nor throw
A mighty hill about our city."
So spoke he. They all feared and brought
The bulls for sacrifice. So there
The lords and leaders of Phæacia
Standing about his altar prayed
The lord Poseidon.

And Odysseus
Now wakened as he lay asleep
In his own land, nor knew it yet
For his own land, for great Athene,
Daughter of Zeus, had cast about him
So dense a mist that he must be
Unknown by all men, for she wished
Herself to tell him all. Nay, even
His wife should know him not, nor men
Of his own town, nor next of kin,

Not till the wooers paid the price
Of proud oppression. So the land
To its lord's eyes seemed strange in all things:—
The paths that stretched afar, the havens
With sheltered landings, the steep cliffs
And leafy trees.
He rose and stood
And looked about on his own land,
And groaned and smote his open hand
Upon his thigh, and in despair
He said:
"Alas, what men are these
Whose land I come to? Are they cruel
And savage men that know not justice,
Or are they kind to strangers, men
That reverence the gods? And whither
Shall I now bear these goods, and whither
Shall I myself now turn? Ah, better
Had these been left with the Phæacians
In their far land. For I might then
Have chanced upon some other lord
Of noble soul and he might, too,
Have made me welcome and have sent me
Safe to my home. But now I know not
Where I may store this wealth, yet here
I may not leave it, lest it prove
A spoil for other men. Alas!
They were not wise, not just to me,
Those lords and leaders of Phæacia
Who brought me here to this strange land.
They said that they would bear me home
To sunny Ithaca. But this
They did not do. May Zeus, the god
Who guards the suppliant, requite them,
He who forever watches all men,

Ready to punish those that fail
From the right way. But come now, I
Must count my treasures and make sure
They carried none away with them
When in their hollow ship they sailed
Off to their home."

So spoke he. Straightway
He numbered o'er the glorious tripods,
The caldrons, and the golden treasure
And lovely woven garments: nothing
He found was lacking. Yet he sorrowed
For his own native land and slowly
Beside the ever-thundering sea
He walked the shore and many a sigh
Uttered in grief.

But now Athene
Came and stood by him and in form
She seemed a youth, a shepherd lad
Fine-nurtured, like a king's own son;
In double folds about his shoulders
His fair-wrought mantle fell and sandals
Were on his shining feet: he bore
A short spear in his hand.

And glad
Odysseus was to see him. Quickly
He came to meet him and he spoke
Wing'd words and said:

"Hail, friend, and greeting
To you, the first I come upon
In this new land. I pray you meet me
With no ill will. But save, I beg,
These goods of mine, and save me too.
To you as to a god I pray,
A suppliant before your knees.
And tell me truly what I ask you,

For I must know. What land is this?
What nation and what men are they
That dwell here? Is this place an island
Facing the sunlight, or a headland
That runs forth from the fertile mainland
To rest upon the deep?"
Then thus
In answer spoke keen-eyed Athene:
"You must lack wit, or you have come,
Stranger, from far away, to ask
What land this is! This land of ours
Is not without a name, and many
Indeed are they that know it—aye,
Many that dwell toward the east
And sunrise, many too that dwell
Westward in darkness. It is truly
A rugged land, no land for men
Who drive in chariots, yet, what though
It lack for level plains, none call it
Wretched or mean. For here grows grain
In bounteous plenty, and here wine;
Here rain fails never and the dew
Lies always heavy; here good pasture
For goats and cattle; here grow trees
Of every kind, and here flow springs
That never cease. Indeed, good stranger,
The name of this land, Ithaca,
Has even reached to Troy, a place
That lies, men say, far off from this
The Achæan land."
So spoke Athene,
And great Odysseus, sorely tried,
Was glad and filled with joy at this
His native land, for so she told him,

The goddess, great Athéne, daughter
Of ægis-bearing Zeus. And thus
He answered in wing'd words, yet spoke
No word of truth, but turned his speech
Asunder from his thought, for ever
Within his bosom he kept hidden
Some crafty purpose:
"I have heard
Of Ithaca far off, in Crete,
Whose wide plains lie beyond the sea, . . .
But thence I fled, for I had slain
Idomeneus' dear son. . . . I smote him
With my bronze spear; . . . dark was the night
That hid the heavens; secretly
I took his life and then I prayed
The proud Phœnicians to receive me
Aboard their ship and set me safe
In sacred Elis. They were driven
Hither by force of winds. By night
We rowed into this haven. Naught
Heeded we supper: from the ship
We landed and lay down. Upon us,
All wearied, fell sweet sleep. And they
Took forth my treasure from the ship,
And set it by me on the sands
As here I lay. So home they sailed
And left me here with aching heart."

So spoke Odysseus, and Athene,
The keen-eyed goddess, smiled and touched him
With kindly hand, and she became
In form a woman tall and fair,
One skilled in lovely arts, and thus
She spoke in wing'd words:

"He must be
A crafty man and clever, too,
Who can outdo you in shrewd tricks
Of every sort—nay, though it were
A god that matched you! Daring man,
Ready in every need and greedy
For new devices. Nay, you cannot
Here now in your own land forbear
From false and lying tales, for these
You loved from childhood.
But now come,
No more of this! We both are skilled
In clever plots. You, of all men,
Are best at planning and wise speeches,
And I am famed among the gods
For wisdom and shrewd thought.
And yet
You knew me not, Pallas Athene,
Daughter of Zeus, though I am ever
At hand and watching over you
In every peril. It was I
Made the Phæacians one and all
Receive you as their friends; and hither
I come now that we two together
May weave some plan to save this wealth
The proud Phæacians gave you—all
Through thought and plans of mine!—when thence
You sailed for home. And one thing more
I now must tell:—how great a measure
Of suffering you yet are fated
To meet in your own house. All this
Bear, since you must, but see you tell
No man or woman of them all
That you are home at last, returned
From your long wanderings. In silence

Endure your many griefs and bear
The blows men give you."
And Odysseus,
Ready of thought, thus spoke and answered:
"Truly, O goddess, it is hard
For any mortal man who meets you
To know you for yourself, though he
Be wise indeed, for you can fashion
Yourself in any form. But this
I know without mistake: you once,
Of old, gave kindly aid while we,
The sons of the Achæans, fought
Far off in Troy. Yet since the hour
We plundered Priam's sacred city
And sailed off in our ships, and heaven
Drove us in diverse ways—nay, never,
Never since then have I beheld you
Daughter of Zeus—ne'er saw you stepping
Aboard my ship to be my helper
In my misfortune. But I pray you
Now, by your Father's name—I cannot
Believe that I can now be come
To sunny Ithaca. Far other
This land I stray in. What you say
Is mockery, a tale to cheat
My troubled mind! Tell me: am I
In very truth now come at last
Home to my own dear land?"
And then
Athene spoke, the keen-eyed goddess,
And answered him:
"Within your breast
There lies a firm unaltering mind;
So I can never turn from you
In evil fortune: you are ever

Prudent and quick of thought and steadfast.
Another man who comes, as you,
Home from wide wanderings, would hasten
With eager joy to greet his wife
And children in his home. But you
Seek not to hear how they may fare
Nor ask of any, till you first
Can make full trial of your wife
Who sits there in the hall and ever
Wastes all the weary nights in weeping
And all the weary days. . . .
But come,
Now let me show you Ithaca,
This pleasant dwelling place, that you
May trust my words. See, here the harbor
Of Phorcys, ancient of the deep;
Here by the harbor's head, the olive,
All in full leaf; and here you see
The vaulted cave wherein you often
Offered the nymphs due sacrifice.
And yonder hill is Neriton
Clothed with its forests."
Speaking thus,
The goddess swiftly swept away
The mists about him: all the land
Lay clear before his eyes. Then gladly
Long-tried Odysseus gazed in joy
On his own land: he kissed the earth
That gives us grain, and raised his hands
And prayed the nymphs:
"You nymphs and naiads,
Daughters of Zeus, I thought I never
Should see you more, but now I greet you
With loving prayers; and I will bring you

Gifts as of old, if she, the daughter
Of Zeus above—she in whose hands
Lies victory, grants me to live
And brings my own dear son to manhood."
Then answering him, Athene spoke,
The keen-eyed goddess:
"Courage. Let not
Such thoughts weigh on your heart. And first,
For all this treasure:—let us seek
Some corner of this wondrous cave
And lay it there to lie in safety.
Then let us shape our plan together
That all may yet go well."
So said she,
And passed within that shadowy cave,
And searched about the cave for places
To lay the treasure. And Odysseus
Bore all there quickly, all the gold,
The enduring bronze, the goodly garments
That the Phæacians gave, and these
They stored with care, and then Athene,
Daughter of ægis-bearing Zeus,
Set in the door a stone. Then sitting
Beside that sacred olive stem,
They planned how best to bring destruction
On the proud wooers.
And first spoke
Keen-eyed Athene:
"Think now well,
Noble Odysseus, shrewd in counsel,
How you may lay your hands in vengeance
Upon these shameless wooers, men
Who for three years have ruled as masters
Here in your hall, the while they wooed
Your noble wife, with proffered gifts,

While she, her heart still sorrowing
Because you come not, holds forth hope
To every one and gives her promise
To each in turn and sends to each
Her messages; though all her mind
Is set on other hopes."

Then answered
Crafty Odysseus:

"I, alas,
Should surely here in my own hall
Have met the evil fate that slew
Great Agamemnon, had you not,
O goddess, shown me clearly thus
All I need know. Come, fashion now
Some crafty plot that I may take
My vengeance on them. Stand you now
Yourself beside me! Fill my heart
With courage to dare all—aye, even
As once you did of old, when we
Brought low Troy's shining crown. If you,
O keen-eyed goddess, stand beside me
Eager as then, I could do battle
Against three hundred men—would you,
O mighty goddess, but vouchsafe
To be my helper!"

Then thus answered
Keen-eyed Athene:

"Surely I
Will be beside you. You shall never
Be from my mind when we begin
This mighty task. Aye, some, I think,
Of these same wooers that devour
Your substance now, with blood and brains
Shall spatter the broad earth. But come,
For I will change you now, that mortals

Shall know you not. For I will wither
The fair flesh from your pliant limbs,
And pluck from off your head the locks
That now shine yellow, and will clothe you
In such a wretched garb that he
Who sees shall shrink away in loathing
From him that wears it. I will dim
The luster of your eyes that once
Were beautiful to see, till you
Shall seem most foul to all the wooers,
Aye, even to your own wife's sight
And to the son you left behind you,
An infant in your hall.
Now first
Seek out the swineherd who keeps watch
Over your swine, for he is loyal,
True to your son and steadfast wife,
Penelope. And you will find him
Sitting beside his swine that pasture
Close by the Raven Rock and near
The spring of Arethusa; there
They eat sweet acorns and they drink
Of those dark waters, food that rounds
Their rich flesh into fatness. There
Stay you awhile and sit beside him
And question him of all. And I
Will go, meanwhile, my way to Sparta,
Land of fair women, and will summon
Telemachus—your own dear son,
Odysseus!—home again, for he
Went forth to wide-wayed Lacedæmon,
To Menelaüs' house, to seek
Tidings of you, to learn if you
Were yet alive."

And wise Odysseus
Answered and said:
"And could you not
Have told him this—you to whose wisdom
All things are known? Or was this done
That he too might go wandering
In grief the restless seas, while others
Waste all his wealth at home?"
Then answered
The keen-eyed goddess:
"Let him be
No burden on your heart, for I
It was, myself, that helped him thither,
That, by thus going, he might win
High praise of men. Nay, there he suffers
No need of toil, but sits at ease
In great Atrides' hall: abundance
Lies all about him.
It is true
That in a black ship there lie lurking
Young men who watch, and hope to slay him
Before he reach his home. But this,
I think, shall never be. Ere that,
O'er some of them there shall be laid
A covering of earth."
So spoke she,
And touched him with her wand and withered
The fair flesh from his pliant limbs,
And plucked from off his head the locks
That shone there yellow, and she laid
On all his limbs the wrinkled skin
Of an old man, and dimmed his eyes
Once beautiful to see, and clothed him
In a vile cloak and tunic—tattered,
Unclean, stained foul with smoke, and o'er them

A great hide, a swift stag's, its hair
All worn away. A staff she gave him
And a poor beggar's scrip with many
A rent therein, its only strap
A wretched cord.

So the two made
Their plans and parted. Off she sped
Hasting to sacred Lacedæmon
To find Odysseus' son.

BOOK FOURTEEN

BUT NOW ODYSSEUS LEFT THE HARBOR
AND TOOK THE STONY PATH THAT RAN
THROUGH THE HIGH WOODED COUNTRY LYING
Along the hilltops. There, Athene
Had told him, lay the dwelling-place
Of the good swineherd, who of all
The servants of the house best watched
Over Odysseus' wealth.
He found him
Sitting before his door, for there
His high-walled court was built, a place
Sheltered on every side, a courtyard
Spacious and fair to see: cleared land
Lay all about it. For the swineherd
Himself had built it for the swine
Of his dear lord now far away,
Nor did his lady know of this,
Nor old Laërtes. He had built it
Of rocks drawn thither, and above it
A fence of thorn. Without he drove
Strong stakes set thick on every side,
Oak, stripped of the black bark. And here,
Within the yard, he made twelve sties,
Set side by side, beds for his swine,
And penned in each were fifty swine
That sleep in mire. These were the sows
And fit for breeding, but the boars
All lay without, and these were fewer.
On them the haughty wooers feasted
And made their number less. Each day

The swineherd sent away the best
Of all his fatted swine: three hundred
And three score now were left.
Near by
Four dogs, like savage beasts, lay sleeping.
These dogs the swineherd, master here,
Had bred himself. And now he sat
And shaped new sandals for his feet,
Cutting a well-tanned hide. The others
Were gone, each on his way: three drove
The swine to pasture, and the swineherd
Had sent a fourth to town to take
A hog to the proud wooers—aye,
So he must do, that they might slay it
In sacrifice, to satisfy
Their hearts with meat.
Now suddenly
The loud-mouthed dogs beheld Odysseus.
With angry clamor they rushed towards him;
But, ready-witted, down he sat
Upon the earth, and let the staff
Fall from his hand. And yet he might,
On his own farm, have met sore hurt,
But with swift feet the swineherd came
Behind them, hurrying through the gate,
And dropped the leather from his hand,
And loudly called the dogs and hurled
Stones thick and fast and drove them off
This way and that. Then thus he spoke
To his own master:
"You came close,
Old man, to being torn in pieces,
All in an instant, by my dogs;
And then I should have suffered blame!
Though surely now the gods already
Have given me enough of grief

And cause for groaning. For I sit
And weep and sigh for my good master
And tend fat swine that other men
Shall eat, not he—while he, perhaps,
Goes hungering for food and wanders
Through lands and towns of men that speak
A speech he knows not; if he still
Indeed be living, and still look
Upon the sunlight! Come with me,
Old man, and we will go together
Into my hut, and there, when you
Have feasted to your heart's desire
On food and wine, then tell me whence
You come here and what cruel hardships
You have endured."

So spoke the swineherd,
And brought him to his lodge and led him
Within the door, and there he laid
A seat for him. For first he heaped
Thick brushwood under; over this
He spread a wild goat's shaggy coat,
Wide, with deep fleece, whereon he used
Himself to make his bed. Odysseus
Rejoiced to be so welcomed. Thus
He spoke to him, and said:

"May Zeus
And the immortal gods, O stranger,
Grant what you most desire, for you
Have welcomed me with kindness."

Then,
Swineherd Eumæus, thus you * answered:
"It is against the law of heaven,

* This peculiar direct address, "You, Eumæus," is used in Homer only in the case of this one character. Perhaps it shows a particularly kindly and personal feeling toward this faithful servant.

Old man, to slight a stranger guest,
Nay, though he were of meaner station
Than you yourself. Strangers and beggars
Come in the care of Zeus, and dear
They hold our gifts, however small.
But sad it is—a servant's lot
Who lives in fear when over him
There rule new masters. For the gods
Indeed have kept from his own home
The man who might have loved me well
And given me such gifts as masters
Oft give—a house, a bit of land,
A wife whom many woo—and so
Reward the man who long has labored
All for his sake, whose work the gods
Prosper as they have prospered here
This work where lies my life. Such gifts
My master would have given me
Had he grown old at home. Alas!
He now has perished. Ah, I would
The house of Helen had so perished,
Bowed to the dust, for she has bowed
The knees of many a man in weakness—
Aye, even his, my lord's, who went
To fight for Agamemnon's honor
Round Ilium famed for steeds, in battle
Against the men of Troy."

So spoke he,
Then with his belt he quickly girt
His tunic round him and went forth
To where within his sties were penned
His droves of pigs. And thence he took
Two pigs and bore them out and slew them,
Singed them, and cut them up for roasting,
And set their flesh on spits. And then,

Roasting their flesh, he carried it,
Still hot upon the spit, and set it
Before Odysseus, strewing on it
White meal; and in an ivy bowl
He mixed wine honey-sweet and sat
Facing his guest; and thus he spoke
To cheer his heart:
"Come, eat now, stranger,
Such food as servants eat, this flesh
Of suckling pigs. The fattened swine
Go to the wooer's feast, to men
That know no fear of heaven, nor pity.
And yet the blest gods do not love
Defiant deeds, but honor justice
And men's good deeds. Nay, even robbers
Who land in cruelty and hate
On a strange shore, though Zeus indeed
May grant them booty and they fill
Their ship and sail away—even these
Feel in their hearts the heavy fear
Of heaven's vengeance. Surely, then,
These wooers have some tidings; surely
They must, through some god's speech, have learned
My master's cruel death. For neither
Will they woo rightfully, nor yet
Get hence to their own homes, but here
They feast in ease and insolence,
And waste his wealth and spare not. Ever,
Each day and night Zeus sends, they slay them
Their victims here, not one nor two—
And draw them wine to drink it off
In wanton wastefulness.
My master
Had wondrous wealth, such wealth as none
Of all the lords on the dark mainland

Or Ithaca itself. The riches
Of twenty men would fail to equal
That wealth of his. And I will tell you
The sum of it: Upon the mainland
Twelve herds of kine, and just as many
Good swine and sheep and goats which ever
Are grazed in herds: all these his herdsmen
And strangers watch. In Ithaca,
Eleven herds of goats go grazing
Along the further shore. Good herdsmen
Watch over them, and every day
The herdsman drives in to the wooers
The fatted goat he deems the finest.
But I must keep the swine and watch them,
And pick the best of them with care
And send them hence."

So spoke the swineherd,
But hungrily Odysseus ate
The meat and eagerly he drank
The wine before him, while in silence
He sowed for the proud wooers seeds
Of coming evil. But at length
When he had dined and satisfied
His heart with food, the swineherd filled
The cup from which he drank himself
And gave it to his guest, filled full
Even to the brim with wine. Odysseus
Then took it, glad at heart, and thus
He spoke with wing'd words:

"Who, good friend,
Was he who, as you tell me, bought you
With so much wealth, and was so rich
And mighty among men? You told me
He died for Agamemnon's honor.
Tell me his name, for I may know him,

If such a man there be. For Zeus
And all the other gods that die not,
Must surely know if I have seen him
And can report of him, for I
Have wandered many ways."
Then answered
The swineherd, master of his men:
"Old man, no man who wanders hither
With news of him, can ever win
His wife's belief, or his dear son's.
For recklessly these wandering men
Will tell their lies in hope to find
Food here and shelter. Little care
Such men for truth. So every vagrant
Who strays to Ithaca goes straightway
To seek my mistress and he babbles
His lying tales. And she receives him
Kindly and lovingly, and questions
Of all that he can tell. She sorrows;
Her eyes shed tears—aye, even so
Will any woman do whose lord
Has died in a far land. And you—
You too, old man, would soon fit up
A fine tale of your own, if some one
Would only offer you new raiment,
A robe and tunic!
Yet, ere this,
Surely the dogs and hovering birds
Have stripped his bones of flesh; his life
Has left his body; or the fish
Have eaten him beneath the sea,
And on the shore his bones lie hidden
In wind-heaped sand. Aye, so he died,
And far away. And only sorrow
Is left for those who loved him—mine

The heaviest share of all, for never
Shall I find such another master
As kind as he, go where I will,
Not though I went once more to seek
Father and mother in the home
Where I was born and where they watched
Over my childhood. Yet for them,
Though sorely now I long to see them
With my own eyes, in my own land,
For them I ne'er can feel such sorrow
As this I feel now for Odysseus
Departed from me. Nay, I shame me,
O stranger, but to speak his name,
Now he is here no more. He loved me
And kept me in his heart, and so
I call him 'my own lord,' what though
He now is far away."
Then spoke
Mighty Odysseus, long-enduring:
"Friend, since you utterly refuse
To take my word, but ever say
He will not come again, and set
Your heart against belief, I tell you,
Not with mere words, but by my oath,
Odysseus will return. Reward me
For my good tidings then, for nothing
I wish till that day comes, though sore
May be my need, for as I hate
The gates of Death itself, I hate
The man who, driven by his need,
Tells lying tales.
Now Zeus be witness,
Greatest of all the gods! These too
Be witness to my words—the hearth
And table of the good Odysseus,

Open to every guest, whereto
I now draw near—witness now all
That what I say shall be accomplished:—
Before this year be passed, Odysseus
Himself shall come again."
Then thus
You answered him, Eumæus:
"Never,
Old man, shall you get pay from me
For that good news, nor ever shall
Odysseus reach his home. But drink
With a light heart and turn your mind
To other things and bring no more
Such thoughts to my remembrance. Heavy
My heart lies in my breast if aught
Brings to my mind my noble master!
But come, old man, and tell the tale
Of your own sorrows; aye, and tell me
What I would rightly know: Who are you?
Out of what land? Where lies your city?
Who are your kinsmen? In what ship
Did you come hither, and what sailors
Brought her to Ithaca? What name
Did these men give themselves? For surely
You came not here afoot."
Then answered
And spoke the wise Odysseus:
"All
You ask me I will tell you now,
And clearly. Yet if we two here,
Within this lodge, had food beside us,
And sweet wine too, enough to last
Day after day—and we should sit
Feasting and talk at ease—even then
I could not in a whole year tell you

All I have suffered, all the sorrows
That I by heaven's will have borne.

(My kindred dwell in Crete's wide plains.*
I was a rich man's son, and prospered
And won me honor, yet my heart
Led me to sail away to Egypt;
And here for years I gathered wealth.
At length a lying knave enticed me
Aboard a ship and hoped to sell me
For a great price. Now when our ship
Was far out on the deep, Zeus smote her
And all my comrades perished. I,
Borne on the mast, went drifting on
To the Thesprotian land, whose lord
Received me kindly. Here it was
That I heard tidings of Odysseus.
The king had welcomed him: even now
A ship lay launched, and sailors waited
To bear him home. But I went thence
Before he came, for the king bade
They bear me in a ship with care
To king Acastus, but they plotted
To sell me for a slave, so stripped me
Of my good garments and then gave me
These wretched rags you see. At evening
We came to Ithaca. They left me
Bound in the ship, but I worked free
And clambered down, and swam to land
And hid me in a grove. They roamed
Seeking awhile, but when they saw
No gain in seeking, off they went
Back to their hollow ship. So heaven

* These lines, containing the untrue tale told by Odysseus, are greatly abridged.

Hid me, then guided me and brought me
Here to a wise man's farm: my fate
Grants me at least to live.")

Then thus
Eumæus, you replied and said:
"Ill-fated stranger, as you told
The tale of all these things, you moved
My heart to pity: much you suffered,
And far you wandered. Yet, I think,
You do not tell all rightly. Never
Shall you convince me with these tales
About Odysseus. Why, I wonder,
Should such a man as you are, lie,
And to no profit? I myself
Well know the truth about my master
And his return. For he was hated
With utter hate by every god;
And so they would not let him die
Among the Trojans, nor in arms
Of loving friends, when he had wound
War's skein out to its end. If only
He so had perished, the Achæans
Would have heaped high his funeral mound,
And to his son he would have left
Fame ever after. Now the winds
Have snatched him without glory.

Here
Far off among my swine I dwell
Nor ever go to town, save only
When wise Penelope commands me.
For so she does when men bring news
Of my good master. Then all gather
And question each new tale—both those
Who weep their noble lord departed,

And those who lightly eat his substance
Nor dread his vengeance. But I care not
To ask or question since the tale
Of an Ætolian deceived me,
For he had slain a man and wandered
In many a land, and to my farm
He came at last, and here I made
The man my guest.
He said he saw
Odysseus with Idomeneus
In Crete, for there Odysseus stayed
To mend his storm-strained ships. And soon,
By summer, or by harvest surely,
He would return. He brought great wealth
And all his noble comrades. Mark, then,
Old man, so sorely tried—though heaven
Has led you to my house, now seek not
With lying tales to give me pleasure
Or move my heart. Not for such tales
Do I respect you and give welcome.
I do this but in reverence
Of Zeus who loves the wanderer,
And my heart pities you."
Then answered
Crafty Odysseus:
"In your bosom
You have an unbelieving heart.
I could not, ever by an oath,
Win you or change your mind. Yet come now,
And let us make a compact, both
Calling for witness on the gods
That hold Olympus. If your master
Returns here to his house, then give me
Raiment to wear, a cloak and tunic,
And send me to Doulichium

Whither I long to go. But if
Your master comes not as I promise,
Then bid your servants seize and cast me
From some high crag, and this shall teach
All other beggars to beware,
Nor bring lies hither."
Then replied
The goodly swineherd:
"And by this,
Stranger, I soon should get myself
A fine and noble fame on earth
Now and hereafter—if when I
Had led you to my house and here
Had given you welcome, I should turn
And slay you, robbing you of life,
How should I dare then pray to Zeus,
The son of Cronus? But it now
Is time for supper; soon my comrades
Will join us; in this lodge we all
Shall share a pleasant meal."
As thus
They spoke together there, the swine
Were close at hand, and with them came
The other swineherds; and they drove them
Into their pens to sleep, and wondrous
Arose the outcry of those swine
Shut in their pens. And now the swineherd
Called to his comrades:
"Bring now hither
The finest hog, for I would slay him
In honor of this stranger, come
From far away. And let us too
Share the good feast, for we have long
Suffered enough to give them tending—

These white-tusked swine, while other men
Grow fat upon our toil, unpunished." . . .

And now, when they had stayed their longing
For food and drink, a servant bore
The bread away, and satisfied
With meat and bread, they made them ready
To lay them down to sleep.
Now night
Was come upon them, a bad night
Without a moon. The whole night through
Zeus sent down rain, and a great wind,
A west wind, which brings rain, was blowing.
Then, to those with him, thus spoke up
Odysseus, for it was his wish
To try the swineherd: would the man
Strip off in kindness to the stranger
The cloak he wore, or would he bid
Some comrade do this?
"Hearken, now,
Eumæus, and you others here,
His comrades. For I now would pray
The old days back and tell a tale.
So mad wine urges me. For wine
Will make the wisest of us sing
And laugh soft laughter—aye, will bid him
Rise up and dance, and make him speak
Words better left unsaid. Yet now,
Since I have broken silence, why
Should I hold back the rest?
Would only
I were but young again and still
Could trust my strength, as on that day
We planned an ambush and went forth

Beneath the walls of Troy. Odysseus
And Menelaüs led, and I
Was third, for so they bade. We came
Close to the city, where its walls
Ascended steep, and there we laid us
Hard by the citadel, concealed
Among dense bushes, crouching low
In reeds and grass, beneath our shields.
Then night came on us with foul weather
Though the north wind had ceased: the air
Was bitter chill. Down from above
Came snow like hoarfrost, biting cold,
And ice formed thick upon our shields.
Now all the rest wore cloaks about them
Over their tunics, and slept warm,
Their shields set at their backs. But I
Had left my cloak among my comrades
As heedlessly I started. 'Surely,'
I said, ' 'twill not be cold!' So off
I marched with only my bright tunic
And shield, and naught besides.
So now,
In night's third watch, when stars rode high,
Thus to Odysseus, there beside me,
I spoke, and pressed him with my elbow,
And he at once gave heed:
'Odysseus,
Laërtes' crafty son, I soon
Shall have no place among the living:
This cold will be my death! No cloak
I have here, for some power above
Beguiled me into coming hither
With this one garment. Now I see
No way to save myself!'

'So said I,
And instantly his mind laid hold
Upon my need. So was he ever,
Ready in council or in battle!
And first, in a low voice, he bade me
'Be silent now, and let no others
Of the Achæans hear!' And then,
Upraised upon his elbow, thus
With lifted head he spoke:
'Good friends,
Hearken! As here I slept, a dream
Came to me from the gods. This place
Where we are come, lies far away
From our own ships. I would there were
Some man to run and tell Atrides,
Great Agamemnon, lord and shepherd
Of all our folk, to send us hither
More men out of the ships.'
Then quickly,
Even as he spoke, Andræmon's son,
Thoas, arose, and cast aside
His purple cloak, and toward the ships
Went speeding off. So in his cloak
I lay there glad till gold-throned dawn
Showed forth her light. Ah, would that I
Were young as I was then—as sure
Of my own strength!"
Then thus you spoke,
O good Eumæus, answering:
"No one, old man, can blame this tale
That you have told us: not a word
Was idle or ill-said. So now
You shall not lack for clothing, no,
Nor aught besides a hapless stranger
Might ask of those he meets. Yet this

Is only for the night. Tomorrow
Wrap you in your old rags again.
For we here have not many changes
Of cloak and tunic: every man
Has but one garment."
So he spoke,
And straightway rose and set a bed
Close by the fire, and on it heaped
Goatskins and sheepskins. There Odysseus
Now laid him down, and over him
The swineherd cast his cloak, a mantle
Both thick and wide, one that he wore
Whenever winds blew wild.
So here
Odysseus slept, and here beside him
Slept the young men. Yet little pleasure
The swineherd found in sleeping here
Far from his swine. He made him ready
To go his way. With joy Odysseus
Saw with what care, while he was gone,
This man watched o'er his wealth.
He first
Slung his keen sword about his shoulders,
Then wrapped him well in a good mantle
To ward him from the wind, and took
A goatskin in his hand, the fleece
Of a great goat well-grown, and grasped
A pointed spear to keep away
Both dogs and men. So forth he went
To lie where all his white-toothed swine
Were sleeping, by a hollow rock,
Sheltered from the north wind.

BOOK FIFTEEN

AND NOW ATHENE WENT HER WAY
TO LACEDÆMON, FOR SHE SOUGHT
NOBLE ODYSSEUS' SON, TO BID HIM
Return to his own home. And there
She found him, and drew near to him,
And said:
"It is no longer wise,
Telemachus, to wander here
So far from home, leaving your house
And all the wealth there, in the power
Of the proud wooers. Now I warn you,
And heed my words: Their leaders lie
Already watching at the straits
That sunder Ithaca and Samos,
And plan to slay you ere you come
To your own land. So steer your ship
Outside the islands, and sail swiftly
By day and night. The god who watches
And keeps you safe, will send a wind
To help you on your way.
And when
You reach the utmost point of land
That juts to sea from Ithaca,
Send then your ship and all your men
On to the city. You yourself
Shall seek the farm where dwells the swineherd
Who keeps your herds of swine, whose heart
Is ever faithful."

At her words
Telemachus aroused his comrades
And bade them make his good ship ready
And loose the cables. And Athene
Sent a fair wind across the sea.
The sun was low as they passed Pheræ
And came by Elis. Then he steered
Toward the far islands dimly seen
Out on the deep. And at the dawn
They came to Ithaca, and there
They lowered sail and rowed the ship
In under land and anchored. Then
Thus spoke Telemachus:
"Now, men,
Sail to the city. My own way
Leads to the farmland and the swineherd.
Later, I too will come." So forth
They thrust the ship and sailed away,
Even as he bade them, to the city.
But he walked swiftly on and reached
The farmyard where the droves of swine
Were lying, where he hoped to find
The worthy swineherd, ever faithful
To his good lord.

BOOK SIXTEEN

ODYSSEUS AND THE GOODLY SWINEHERD
TOGETHER IN THE HUT AT DAWN
PREPARED THEIR BREAKFAST, KINDLING FIRE,

When they had sent the men away
To drive the swine afield. And now
Telemachus drew near. The dogs,
Though wont to bark, now wagged their tails
Nor barked at all; and great Odysseus
Saw how they wagged their tails, and heard
The sound of footsteps, and spoke quickly
With wing'd words to Eumæus:
"Surely,
Eumæus, there comes hither now
A friend or one you know! The dogs
Bark not, but wag their tails, and faintly
I hear the fall of steps."
And scarcely
Had he thus said, when his dear son
Stood in the doorway. Then the swineherd
Sprang up surprised, and from his hands
Let fall the bowl with which he labored
Mingling the glowing wine. He hastened
To greet his master and he kissed him
On face and both fair eyes, and kissed
His two hands too, and all the while
Let fall his springing tears, . . . and said:
"So you are come, Telemachus,
Sweeter than light. I thought I never

Should see you more when you went sailing
Away to Pylus. Come, come in,
Dear child; my heart is glad to see you.
But now you were far off, yet here
You are among us!" . . .

So he spoke,
And took the young man's brazen spear.
So in now stepped Telemachus
Over the sill of stone. His father
Rose from his seat to give him place,
But this he would not have, and stayed him,
And said:
"Nay, stranger, sit. For we,
Here on this farm of ours, with ease
Shall find a seat, and this man here
Will soon provide one."
So he spoke.
Back to his seat then turned Odysseus,
And the good swineherd heaped fresh bushes
And spread a fleecy skin upon them
And here now sat Telemachus,
Odysseus' own dear son. . . .

And now,
When food and drink had stayed their hunger,
He said to the good swineherd:
"Whence,
Good father, comes this stranger?" . . .

Then,
Swineherd Eumæus, thus you answered:
"From Crete, he told me, but through many
A city of mankind he passed
In wandering hither. . . . He has come
To my own house, and to your charge

I give him now. Do with him, then,
Whate'er you will. He is, he says,
Your suppliant."
Then thus replied
Prudent Telemachus:
"Eumæus,
Your words pierce to my heart. How can I
Receive a guest at home? . . . And yet,
Since he has come here to your house,
I'll give him garments, cloak and tunic,
Besides a two-edged sword and sandals
To bind upon his feet, and send him
Where he would go. Or keep him here
With you upon your farm, and I
Will send him clothing, aye, and food
Of every kind, lest he prove costly
To you and yours. But to my house
Among the wooers, he shall never
Go by my will, for they are filled
With sin and insolence. . . . But go,
Quickly, my good old friend—go tell
Prudent Penelope that I
Am safe here, come from Pylus." . . .

So
Then spoke Telemachus, and sent
The swineherd on his way. He took
His sandals and he bound them on,
And set off for the town. And yet
He did not go his way unseen
By great Athene, for she came,
In form a woman, fair and tall,
And skilled in dainty crafts, and stood
Close by the door. Odysseus saw her;

His son beheld her not, though standing
Before his face, nor knew her presence,
For not to all men do the gods
Appear in open sight. Odysseus
Saw, and the dogs saw too; they barked not,
But whimpering slunk off in fear
Across the farmland. With her brows
She signed to him. Odysseus saw
And understood, and forth he came
By the great courtyard wall and there
He stood before her. Then to him
Thus spoke Athene:

"Shrewd Odysseus,
Laërtes' son, now you shall tell
Your son your secret; now no longer
Need you keep silence. And you twain
Shall plan together death and doom
For the proud wooers. Then go forth
Together to your glorious city.
I shall not be far off. My soul
Looks forward to the battle."

So
Athene spoke, and touched Odysseus
With her gold wand. Upon his body
She put a fresh new cloak and tunic,
And mightier she made him seem
And fairer, and the deeper hue
Of youth came back; his cheeks once more
Were rounded, and upon his chin
His beard was darkened. This she did,
Then went her way.

And now Odysseus
Entered the lodge, and his son marvelled
Beholding him, and turned his eyes

Away in awe, lest this might be
A god before him, and he spoke
In wing'd words:
"You are changed, O stranger,
From what you seemed but now. Your garments
Are not the same; your very flesh
Is altered. Surely you are one
Of the immortal gods that have
Wide heaven for home. Then look upon us
In kindness while we offer you
A welcome offering and bring you
Gifts finely wrought of gold. Show, now,
Compassion on us!"
Then replied
Noble, long-tried Odysseus:
"Nay,
I am no god! Why liken me
To those that die not! I am he
Whom you so long have wept, for whom
You bore men's violence."
So said he,
And kissed his son and from his cheeks
Let fall a tear to earth, for steadfast
Until that moment, he had stayed
His eyes from weeping. But his son,
Who could not yet believe that this
Could be his father, answered him
And said:
"No, you are not Odysseus;
My own dear father! Some strange god
Enchants my eyes, to make me weep
In greater grief hereafter. Never
Could any mortal man so change
Through human wisdom—not unless
Some god should choose to come and aid him,

And change his semblance thus at will
To young or old. A moment past
You were an old man, meanly clad,
Now you are like the gods who dwell
In the wide heavens."
Then Odysseus
Answered and said:
"Telemachus,
It is unworthy of you thus
To stare and marvel beyond measure
At your own father, when at last
He stands before you! No Odysseus
But I will ever come! For I
It is, I that you see before you,
Who have borne perils and have wandered
In many lands, and now at last
Come, after twenty years, again
To my own native land."
So said he,
And sat him down. Then round his neck
His son cast both his arms and sobbed
And poured forth tears. Upon them both
Came longing and wild weeping. Loud
Rose their lament, and never ceased—
Like the shrill cry of birds, of sea-hawks
Or crook-clawed cormorants, whose young
The country-folk bear off, ere yet
Their wings are fit for flight:—even so
All piteously beneath their brows
Their tears then fell. . . .

At last thus spoke
Noble Odysseus:
. . . "Hither now
I come at counsel of Athene,

That you and I may plan the slaying
Of all our enemies. But tell me
The number of these wooers—tell me
That I may know how many men
They are and of what sort. I then
May ponder in my heart, and find
Whether we two may fight them here
With no man's aid, or needs must call
For aid on others."
Then thus answered
Discreet Telemachus:
"Dear father,
Long have I heard of your great name—
A warrior strong of arm, and wise
When men hold council. But this thing
You speak of—this is far too great!
Awe takes me at the thought, for never
Could two men fight against so many,
All mighty warriors. They number
Not ten, nay, not twice ten, but more,
Far more, . . . more than five score. If we
Must face all these within our hall,
Bitter for us and terrible
May prove this vengeance that you seek,
Now you are come. Nay, rather think
As best you may, what men will fight
Upon our side, or will in friendship
Give us their help."
Then thus replied
Noble, long-tried Odysseus:
"Nay,
But I will tell you of such helpers.
Heed then and listen! Think you, now,
That Father Zeus and great Athene

Are aid enough, or must I seek
For more to help us!"
Then replied
Telemachus:
"Strong helpers truly
Are these you name, who sit on high
Among the clouds and rule there ever
O'er men and deathless gods."
Then spoke
Noble Odysseus thus:
"Not long
Will those two keep them from that battle
And its wild tumult, when we two
In our own hall shall meet those wooers
In the dread strife of war. But go you
To-morrow morning home; there join
The haughty wooers. And the swineherd
Shall bring me in, an aged beggar.
Then, if they treat me with foul insult
In my own home, still let your breast
Endure it all. Nay, though they drag me
About the hall, and hurl their missiles,
Look on in patience: speak smooth words
And bid them cease, but they will heed not,
For on them comes their fated day.
And this I say now: mark it well:
If you are truly mine, the son
Of my own ancient blood, let no one
Learn that Odysseus is returned—
No, not Laërtes, not the swineherd
Nor any of the house, nay, not
Penelope herself! We two
Alone will find what loyalty
Still dwells here in my house, what hearts
Are faithful yet!"

And now, at evening,
Back came the swineherd to Odysseus
And his brave son, and there they made
Their supper ready. But Athene
Had first drawn near and touched Odysseus
With her gold wand, and once again
She made him agèd to behold
And meanly clad, lest the good swineherd
Should look upon his face and know him,
And go to wise Penelope
And tell his tidings.
Now they turned them
From toil and feasted, and when hunger
Was stayed with food and drink, their hearts
Then thought of rest, and so upon them
There came the gift of sleep.

BOOK SEVENTEEN

NOW WHEN THE EARLIEST DAWN APPEARED
ROSE-FINGERED, THEN TELEMACHUS,
DEAR SON OF GREAT ODYSSEUS, BOUND
Upon his feet his sandals fair
And took his mighty spear that fitted
His hand so readily. And now,
Ere he set forth to town, thus said he
To the good swineherd:
"Now, old friend,
I go to town so that my mother
May see me, for she will not cease,
I know, her piteous tears and weeping
Till she herself has seen me. This
I leave for you to do, to guide
This stranger to the town, that there
The man may beg his bread. Who chooses
May give him then a crust to eat,
A drink too from his cup. I have not
A home for every guest; too many
The troubles that come pressing on me
To vex my heart. So, if this stranger
Should take this ill, the worse for him!
I love, myself, plain speaking."
Then
Thus answered wise Odysseus:
"Nay,
Good friend, I have no wish to stay here.
In town a beggar fares far better
Than on the farm, for there a man

Can beg him food, and whoso will
May give him freely. I am now
Too old to live here on a farm
And labor at each task my master
May lay upon me. Go your way,
And, as for me, this man shall guide me
As you have bidden, after I
Have warmed me well beside the fire
And the sun gains in strength, for poorly
I now am clad; the frosts of morning
Might do me hurt: the town, they tell me,
Lies far away."

So spoke Odysseus.
And now Telemachus went forth
Across the farmland. Fast he walked
With hurrying feet, still planning evil
Against the wooers.

And at last
He reached the stately house and set
The spear he carried in its place
By a great pillar. Then he entered
O'er the stone threshold. First of all
To see him was old Eurycleia,
His nurse, as she was spreading fleeces
Upon the carven chairs. And swiftly
She came with flowing tears to meet him;
And round him all the serving maidens
Of brave Odysseus came in welcome
And kissed him on the face and shoulders.
And now there came forth from her room
Penelope, like Artemis,
Or golden Aphrodite. Weeping,
She cast her arms about her son
And kissed his face and his fair eyes,

And then amid her sobs she spoke
And said, in wing'd words:
"Now at last
You come, Telemachus, more welcome
Than the sun's light. I thought my eyes
Should never see you more, when you
Went off so secretly to Pylus
Aboard your ship, to seek for tidings
Of your dear father. Tell me now,
What saw you on your way?"
Then thus
Telemachus replied:
"Nay, mother,
Start not my tears nor stir my heart
Within my bosom, for I barely
Escaped the stroke of death. . . .
Now all
I will tell truly. First we went
To Pylus, to the home of Nestor,
The shepherd of his folk, and he
Received us in his stately palace,
And gave us welcome as a father
Would welcome home a son who long
Has gone from home and now once more
Has come from far away. Such welcome
He and his noble sons then gave me.
Yet of the brave Odysseus he
Had heard no tidings, not a word
From any man on earth, if he
Were dead or living. Then he sent me
In a strong chariot with horses
To Atreus' son, great Menelaüs
The famous spearman. There I saw
The Argive Helen, she for whom
The Argives and the Trojans suffered—

So willed the gods. And Menelaüs,
Who shouts so loud in battle, asked me
Why, with what purpose, I was come
To sacred Lacedæmon. So
I told him all the truth, and he
Answered and said:
'Alas, they seek
To lay them in a brave man's lair,
These men of little might! Aye, even
As when in a strong lion's den
A hind has left her new-born fawns,
Unweaned, to sleep the while she goes
Roaming by slopes and grassy hollows
Seeking for food. And now the lion
Enters once more his lair and brings
A dreadful death on all. Even so
Odysseus on these men shall bring
A dreadful death. Ah, Father Zeus,
Athene and Apollo! Would
He might return as on that day
In stately Lesbos, when he rose
And wrestled there and brought his man
Down mightily, and the Achæans
Rejoiced beholding. Would he so
Might meet these wooers! They would find
Swift fate and bitter wedding banquets.
But now of this you ask:—I will not
Deceive you nor turn off my speech
To other things, but I will tell you
The tale the Ancient of the Sea,
Who errs not, told himself. No word
Shall I conceal or keep in secret.
He told me that he saw Odysseus
Upon an island, sore distressed,

Held in the nymph Calypso's halls,
Who kept him there by force. He cannot
Return to his own land: he has
No ships with oars, nor has he men
To bear him over the broad backs
Of rolling seas.'
This tale I heard
From Atreus' son, great Menelaüs,
The famous spearman. And, this done,
I sailed for home. The immortal gods
Gave a fair wind and brought me safely
To my own native land."
So spoke
Her son and stirred his mother's heart
Within her bosom.

But meanwhile
Before Odysseus' door the wooers
Were all at play: on level ground
They hurled their spears and cast the discus
As they had done before, so great
Their reckless insolence. Now came
The time for supper, and the flocks,
Driven by those whose wont it was,
Came home from pasture. Then up spoke
Before them Medon, the good herald
Who ever pleased them most, and ever
Was present at their feasts:
"Come, now,
Young masters, since you all have taken
Your pleasure in the sports, come hither
Within the house, and we shall make
Our good meal ready. Naught is better
Than food at feasting-time!"

So spoke he,
And up they sprang and hastened in,
Heeding his words. So they all came
Into that stately house and cast
Their cloaks upon the chairs and couches,
And slew great sheep and fatted goats
And killed a fat hog and a heifer
And so prepared their feast.

Meanwhile
Odysseus and the goodly swineherd
Had left the farm and set them forth
Upon the road to town. Now first
The swineherd, master of his men,
Thus spoke:
"Your mind is set, then, stranger,
On going to the town to-day,
As my good master bade, though I
Would sooner leave you here with me,
A watcher on my farm. Yet I
Must heed him ever, and must stand
In fear of his reproach. Aye, hard
It is to listen to the words
A master speaks in blame! But come,
Let us be going, for the day
Is quickly passing and with evening
It will grow colder."
Then thus answered
The wise Odysseus:
"Yes, I know;
I see your meaning, for you speak
To one who understands. But come,
Give me, if you should have one trimmed,
A staff to lean on, for, you say,
We go by slippery ways."

So spoke he,
And round his shoulders slung his wallet
Ragged and wretched, hung in place
By a poor twisted cord. Eumæus
Gave him the staff he asked. So forth
The two men went, and dogs and herdsmen
Remained to watch the farm.
And so
The herdsman guided toward the city
His lord and master, like a beggar
Wretched and old, and leaning ever
Upon a staff, his body clad
In wretched garments.
Now it fell,
As they, along that rugged way,
Drew closer to the town, they reached
A well-walled spring whose waters flowed
In a clear stream. The townsfolk came
Hither for water. All about it
A grove of poplars grew, and circled
The spring that fed their roots. Cool water
Flowed from the rock above. And near it
There stood an altar to the nymphs
And all who passed made offerings.
Now here the son of Dolius met them,
Melanthius, and he was driving
Picked goats from all his flock to feast
The hungry wooers. By his side
There went two herdsmen. And he saw them
And spoke out in abuse and hailed them
With foul, insulting words that roused
Odysseus' soul to wrath:
"Now truly
I see knave leading knave: the gods
Ever link like to like. Come, tell me,

Swineherd, vile fellow, whither now
You lead that glutton, that foul beggar
Who licks the plates at feast—a man
Who rubs his shoulders in each doorway
And begs for scraps of food, but never
For gifts fit for a man, for swords
Or brazen caldrons. Would I had him
To watch my farm and clean my sheepfold
And bring the kids their food. Perhaps
By drinking whey he might put flesh
On those shrunk thighs. But he already
Is hardened in bad ways and never
Could follow honest work. He rather
Would beg about the town here, asking
Food for his greedy belly. Nay,
I tell you this, and as I say
It shall befall. If this man ventures
Near great Odysseus' house, the wooers
Shall fling at him full many a footstool
To fly about his head or shatter
Those ribs of his as pelted forth
He flees the house."

So spoke he. Then,
Passing, in foolish insolence,
He smote Odysseus with his heel
Upon the hip, yet could not thrust him
Out of the path, for ever firmly
He kept his place.

And now Odysseus
Stood pondering—should he rush upon him
And slay him with his staff, or swing him
Aloft from earth and dash him down
Headlong to death? Yet he endured,
Mastering his wrath. And now the swineherd,

Fixing his eyes upon his face,
Reproved Melanthius thus, and prayed
With lifted hands:
"Nymphs of this spring,
Daughters of Zeus, if ever here
Odysseus burned before your altar
The thighs of lambs and kids, well folded
In plenteous fat, grant now my prayer:
May he come back to us! Some god
Guide him but hither! For he then
Would scatter far and wide all those
Brave shows of insolence you wear
As you go idling through the town,
While rascal herdsmen ever waste
The flocks that you should tend!"
Then thus
Replied Melanthius the goatherd:
"Alas, this dog here speaks like one
Who calls down frightful curses! Nay,
Some day, in my black ship, I'll take him
Far off from Ithaca and sell him
At a good price. I would Apollo
Who bears the silver bow, would smite
Telemachus to death to-day
In his own halls or let him fall
Beneath the wooers' hands. Would this
Might be as sure as that Odysseus,
Now far from home, shall never see
The day of his return!"

So said he,
And left them plodding on their road
And went his way and quickly came
To his lord's house. . . .

Meanwhile Odysseus
And the good swineherd stayed their steps
As they drew near, for all about them
Came music of the hollow lyre,
For Phemius within was singing
And struck the strings. And now Odysseus
Took the good swineherd by the hand
And said:
"This is, indeed, Eumæus,
Odysseus' house. Aye, easily
A man might tell it, though full many
Stood all about. For building here
Is joined to building, and the courtyard
Is closed about with walls and coping,
And double gates protect it. None
Could capture it by force. And this
I see, moreover: many a man
Is gathering for a feast. The savor
Of roast fat rises. In the hall
I hear the lyre, a gift the gods
Have given us, the fit companion
Of the glad feast."
And thus you answered,
Swineherd Eumæus:
"Aye, you know it,
And readily. You are in nowise
Of sluggish wit. But come, consider
How we shall best contrive! Will you
Go first into the stately dwelling
And join the wooers, while I wait
Without the door? Or, if you will,
Wait here, while I go first. Yet linger
Not overlong, lest some one spy you
Lingering without, and hurl things at you

Or drive you hence with blows. I bid you
Think warily of this."
Then answered
Long-tried Odysseus:
"Nay, I know;
I see your meaning, for you speak
To one who understands. Go first
And I will wait behind. For I
Am not unused to blows and missiles.
I have a sturdy spirit: many
The cruel hardships I have suffered
From war and wave; be this but added
To swell the tale. Yet man may never
Command a hungering belly. Nay,
It is a deadly thing and brings
Full many an evil. For, behold,
Just for its sake strong ships make ready
To sail the restless deep and bear
Woes to our enemies."
So spoke they
One to another.

Now a dog
Lay near, and heard, and straightway lifted
His head and ears. For this was Argos,
Steadfast Odysseus' dog—a dog
He reared long since, but never used,
For ere he used him, he went thence
To sacred Ilium. Young men,
In days now gone, would take the dog
To chase wild goats and deer and hares,
But now, his master far away,
He lay despised upon the dung
Left by the cattle and the mules

Heaped high before the doors, there waiting
Until the thralls should bear it thence
To dung the many acres. There
Argos, this dog, now lay, all foul
With vermin. Yet when he beheld,
Weak though he was, Odysseus near him,
He wagged his tail and dropped both ears,
Though he had now no strength to move
Nearer his master.
And Odysseus
Saw him, but drew not near. He wiped
A tear away before Eumæus
Might see he wept; then thus he spoke
And said:
"Now this is strange, Eumæus,
Why should a dog like this lie here
Upon a dunghill? For this dog
Is finely formed: I cannot say
Whether his speed can match his beauty,
Or if he be but of those dogs
That masters keep for show at table."
Then, good Eumæus, you replied:
"Aye, he who owned this dog has perished
In a far land. Were this dog now
What he was once, in grace of form
And feats of hunting—on the day
His master went to Ilium
And left him here—you would be seized
With sudden wonder did you see
His swiftness and his strength. No beast
That he once started from his lair
In the dense forest depths escaped him;
Keenly he followed scent. But now
His evil days have come. His master

Has perished far away; the women
Care not and let him lie untended.
For slaves, when masters pass from power,
Give no more heed to toil. When once
Ill fortune brings a man to bondage
Far-thundering Zeus then takes from him
Full half his worth."
So spoke Eumæus,
Then entered that fair house and passed
Straight down the hall and through the midst
Of those proud wooers. Then on Argos
Death's dark end came, when he had seen
Odysseus, gone for twenty years.

Noble Telemachus first saw,
Long ere the rest, the swineherd coming
Across the hall, and nodded to him
And called him thither. And the swineherd,
Glancing about him, took a chair
That stood hard by, the chair from which
The carver sent forth meat in plenty
Among the wooers when they feasted
There in the hall. This chair the swineherd
Bore to the table where he faced
Telemachus, and sat him down.
A herald brought him food and served it
With bread out of the basket.
Now,
A little after him, Odysseus
Entered the house. He seemed a beggar
Wretched and old, and wretched too
The clothing that he wore. And there
He sat him on the ashen threshold
Within the doorposts. . . .

And now spoke
Telemachus to the good swineherd,
And took up from a basket bread
And meat too—all his hands could grasp—
"Take this and give it yonder stranger
And bid him pass among the wooers
And ask of every man, for shame
Is no good partner for the man
Who lacks for all."
These words he spoke.
The swineherd hearkened and he went
And stood beside Odysseus, speaking
Thus in wing'd words:
"Telemachus
Sends you this, stranger, and he bids me
Tell you to pass among the wooers
And ask of every one, for shame
Is of small profit to a beggar."
So said he, and the wise Odysseus
Thus answered:
"Zeus, who art o'er all,
Now make Telemachus most blest
Of all men. May he have whatever
His heart desires."
So he spoke,
And took the food in both his hands
And set it down beside his feet
Upon his shabby wallet. There
He sat and ate, the while the minstrel
Was singing in the hall. But when
The feast was over and the minstrel
Had ceased his song, then through the hall
The wooers raised loud clamor.

Now
Beside Laërtes' son, Odysseus,
Athene stood, and bade him go
And beg his bread among the wooers,
And learn thus, which of them were righteous
And which were lawless. Yet not one
Would she deliver from the evil
That came upon them.
So he passed
Begging, from left to right, with hands
Outstretched to all, like one who long
Has begged his bread. They gave in pity
And wondered as they saw, and questioned
Who he might be, and whence he came.
And now Melanthius the goatherd
Spoke up among them:
"Hear me now,
You wooers of our far-famed lady.
I know this beggar; I have seen
The man before. I saw the swineherd
Leading him to this house. Yet nothing
I know of him, but this, nor know
Who are his kindred."
So he spoke,
And now Antinoüs rebuked
The swineherd with these words:
"Now swineherd,
Rascal—as all men know—why brought you
This fellow to our town? Are we
Lacking in beggars—these foul vagrants
Who pester us and lick the plates
Upon our tables? Nay, you care not
If men like this come flocking here
To eat up all your master's living,
So you bring in one more!"

Then thus
You spoke and answered him, Eumæus,
Keeper of swine:
"Antinoüs,
You may be noble, but your speech
Becomes you ill. For who would bid
A stranger from afar, or go
To seek out such a man, unless
It were perchance a man whose skill
Might serve the land—perhaps some seer
Or healer of men's ills or one
Who builds with timbers, or some bard
Blest by the gods, whose song delights us.
For men like these are ever welcome
O'er the wide earth. But no one, surely,
Would bring a beggar in, to feed him
From his own share! But you are ever,
Of all the wooers here, the harshest
To us who serve Odysseus—aye,
And most to me! Yet I can bear it,
So long as wise Penelope
Dwells in this house, and here with her
Noble Telemachus!"
Then thus
Spoke up Telemachus and said:
"Nay, silence! Do not make reply
In many words. Antinoüs
Is ever wont to stir up anger
With bitter speech: aye, other men
He angers too."
So said he. Then
In wing'd words to Antinoüs
He spoke:

"Antinoüs, you treat me
As a kind father treats his son,
For you would bid me give strict order
To drive this stranger hence. Now God
Forbid that this should be! Take food
And give it him. I do not grudge it.
I bid you do this. Have no fear
Lest my good mother or her servants
Forbid you! But no thought of this
Was in your heart. For you love better
To eat, yourself, than give to others!"
Then thus Antinoüs replied:
"Your words, Telemachus, are lofty,
Your temper, uncontrolled. And what
Is this you prate of? If these wooers
All gave as much as I, this house
For some three months to come, I think,
Would keep this man away!"

He spoke,
And reached his hand to grasp a footstool
Beneath the table, one whereon
He ever rested, as he dined,
His dainty feet.

Now all the others
Had made their gifts and filled the wallet
With bread and meat. And now Odysseus
Would soon have gone back to the threshold
To taste the Achæans' gifts. But now
He stopped before Antinoüs
And spoke to him, and said:

"You, friend,
Now give me, too, I pray. You seem
Not least of these Achæans here
But best among them all; you look
Indeed a king. So it is right

That you should give me bread, and give
More bounteously than all the rest,
And I will make your name renowned
Through the wide world. For once I too
Was wealthy among men and dwelt
In a proud dwelling, and I gave
To every wanderer, nor asked
Whence he was come or what his need.
And I had hosts of servants—all
That makes life good for men and spreads
Their fame for wealth abroad. But Zeus,
The son of Cronus, snatched it all
Out of my hands—for such his will—
And drove me forth with rambling pirates. . . .
To Egypt and to Crete and Cyprus. . . .
Thence am I come now, as you see,
In sore distress."

And thus in answer
Antinoüs spoke:

"Some god sent hither
This pest to spoil our feast. Get back—
Out on the open floor, nor stand
So near my table! Or you'll find
An Egypt and a Cyprus too,
And bitter they will be! How bold
You are, and shameless! You go round
To each in order, and they give
With open hand. No heed nor scruple
Stays them from giving what belongs
To other men, so long as each
Gets his own share!"

Then backward stepped
The shrewd Odysseus and he said:
"Alas that you should lack a mind
To match your beauty! You would never,

Were you at home, give even salt
To a poor beggar, since you grudge,
When sitting at another's table,
Merely to reach your hand for bread
And give it, out of all this plenty!"
So spoke he, and Antinoüs
Grew angrier yet at heart, and fiercely
He looked upon him, and he spoke
In wing'd words:
"You shall never go
Out of this hall unharmed, since here
You speak such insolence!"
He spoke,
And snatched his footstool up and threw it.
It struck Odysseus' back, close by
Where the right shoulder rounds, but steadfast
He stood there as a rock, nor staggered
Beneath the blow, but shook his head
And pondered plans of evil. Back
He went then to the door and there
He sat him down, and laid beside him
His well-filled wallet, and then spoke
Thus to the wooers:
"Hear, I pray,
You wooers of this famous queen,
For I must speak as my soul bids me:
No man feels hurt at heart or angry
At any blow he gets in battle
To save his goods—his fleecy sheep
Or herd of oxen. But this blow
Antinoüs gave me for no cause
But my poor belly's need—a thing
That brings man many an evil. Yet
If we poor beggars, too, have gods
That guard us, and avenging spirits,

I pray that on Antinoüs
Ere he may wed, there may alight
The doom of death."
And thus then spoke
Antinoüs, Eupithes' son:
"Sit, stranger, now, and eat in quiet,
Or get you elsewhere, or, to pay you
For speech like this, the young men here
Shall drag you by the hand or foot
Throughout the house till all the skin
Be stripped from off you!"
So he spoke,
And all men there were filled with anger,
Hearing his words. And thus upspoke
One arrogant young wooer:
"This,
Antinoüs, is not well. Aye, surely
You now are lost, if gods there be
Above in heaven. Nay, the gods
Themselves, like strangers from far lands,
Come down, and pass in many a form
Throughout our cities to behold
Man's sins and righteous deeds."
Even so
The wooers spoke. Antinoüs
Heeded them not, but in his heart
Telemachus felt hidden anger,
Thinking upon the blow, yet let
No tear fall from his eyes but shook
His head in silence, brooding evil.

And now, when wise Penelope
Heard of that blow struck in the hall
Then said she to her maids:

"Even thus,
Antinoüs, may the archer-god
Apollo smite you!"
And then answered
Eurynome, the matron:
"Ah,
If heaven could but grant our prayers,
Not one of all these men should see
Another bright-throned dawn."
Then answered
Heedful Penelope:
"Good mother,
I hate them every one, for always
They plan our hurt. And yet of all
I hate Antinoüs most—aye, hate him
As death's black ending! Here there comes
Into our house a luckless stranger
To beg of those within, for need
Compels him thus. And all the others,
Filling his wallet, gave him freely.
But this man smote him with a stool,
Striking his back, behind the shoulder!"
So spoke she, sitting with her maids
High in her room, while great Odysseus
Sat eating in the hall. And now
She called the goodly swineherd to her
And said:
"Go, good Eumæus, bid
This stranger hither. I must speak
A word in welcome, and would ask
If he has heard aught of Odysseus
Who now endures such grief, or aught
Has seen with his own eyes. He seems
Like one who has fared far."

Then thus
You answered her, swineherd Eumæus:
"I would, O lady, these Achæans
Might but keep silence. He could tell you
Tales that would charm your heart. Three nights
I kept him and three days together
In my own hut, and there he held me
Enchanted in my room. He says
Odysseus' kin and his of old
Were friends. Crete was his home, where dwells
The race of Minos. Thence he comes
But newly, toiling bitterly
Through many sorrows, on and on
With ceaseless wandering. He holds
Fast to his tale that he has heard
News of Odysseus, and he says
That he is near at hand and now
Is in the rich Thesprotian land,
A living man, and that he brings
Much treasure home."
Then thus replied
Heedful Penelope:
"Go, call him,
And let him tell this tale of his
Before my face. And let the wooers
Make merry, sitting at our doors,
Aye, in our house! Their hearts are light,
Their wealth lies in their homes, unwasted—
Their bread and their sweet wine. For none
Save servants feed on these. But here
They loiter idly through our house
Day after day. They slay our cattle,
Our sheep, our fatted goats; and merry
They sit at feast, drinking our wine,

And naught they fear. For now no longer
Is there a man here like Odysseus
To drive them from our door. Alas!
Could but Odysseus now come home—
To his own land again, he quickly
With his good son to aid, would smite
These men in vengeance!"
So she spoke,
And as she spoke, Telemachus
Sneezed loudly, till the house around
Reëchoed wondrously. She laughed
And then, with wing'd words, to Eumæus
She said:
"Go, call this stranger here
Before me. Saw you not how now
My son sneezed as I spoke. So surely
This death that comes upon the wooers
Strikes not a few, but all. Not one
Of all these wooers shall escape
From death and doom. This too I say,
And fix it well in mind: If I
Shall learn this stranger's tale is true,
Then shall I give him garments, aye,
A cloak and tunic, too."
So said she,
And when he heard her words, the swineherd
Went down, and stood before Odysseus
And said in wing'd words:
"Aged stranger,
The mother of Telemachus
Prudent Penelope, now calls you.
Her heart is urging her to ask you
About her husband, for she suffers
Great sorrow for his sake. She says,
If she shall find the tale you tell her

Is true, she then will give you garments—
A cloak and tunic; you are surely
In need of these. And you may beg
Through all this land and fill your belly,
And whoso will, may give."
Then thus
The long-enduring great Odysseus
Answered:
"Eumæus, I would quickly
Tell wise Penelope the whole
Of my true story. For full well
I know Odysseus' tale: we both
Have borne the same afflictions. Yet
I fear this host of cruel wooers
Whose arrogant and violent deeds
Reach heaven's iron vault. Even now,
As I passed through the hall, nor there
Did harm to any one, this man
Smote me, and to my hurt. Yet no one,
Nay, not Telemachus, nor any,
Came to protect me. Bid her then
She tarry, eager though she be,
There in the hall, till set of sun.
Then let her ask me as she will
About her lord's return. But first
I pray she seat me by the fire,
For wretched are these clothes, and this
You know full well, for to you first
I came when I sought aid."
So spoke he,
And when the swineherd heard his words,
He went his way. And when he crossed
The threshold of her room, then spoke
Penelope:

"How now, Eumæus!
Are you not bringing him? Nay, what
Can he be thinking of, this beggar?
Is he afraid some man may blame him?
Or is it shame in this great house?
A homeless man can gain him nothing
By being timid!"
Then you thus,
Eumæus, answered her:
"This stranger
Has spoken rightly, for he thinks
As any would, who would avoid
The insolence of these proud men.
And so he bids you wait till sunset,
And this, O lady, is more fitting
For your own sake, that you should speak
Here with this man alone, and hearken
The tale he has to tell."
Then answered
Heedful Penelope:
"This stranger
Thinks not unwisely, let him be
Whoso he may, for ne'er before
Have any mortal men so wrought
Evil and reckless deeds."
So said she,
And now the goodly swineherd left her
And passed forth through the throng of wooers
When he had told her all. Then straightway
He spoke thus to Telemachus
In wing'd words, bending close his head
That others might not hear:
"Now, friend,
I go to guard my swine and all
I keep upon my farm, for this

Sustains both you and me. Watch well.
Be wary. Let your heart take heed
No harm befall you. Many a man
Among the wooers ever plans
Evil against you. Now may Zeus
Destroy them all ere any evil
Be brought upon us!"
Then replied
Prudent Telemachus:
"So be it.
My good old friend. Now go your way
When you have supped, and come with morning
And bring new victims for the feast.
As for the rest, leave all to me
And the immortal gods."
So said he,
And now Eumæus took his seat
Upon the polished bench and ate
And drank his fill. Then forth he went
Back to his swine. He left the hall
And courtyard thronged with feasters. There
With dance and song they made them merry,
For now their day drew nigh its end.

BOOK EIGHTEEN

AND NOW INTO THE HALL THERE CAME
A BEGGAR OF THE TOWN, A FELLOW
WHO BEGGED ABOUT THROUGH ITHACA—
Famed for his greedy belly; never
Would he do aught but eat and drink,
And though he had no strength or sinew,
Mighty he was to see.
This fellow
Was named Arneius: his good mother
So called him from his birth, but "Irus"
Was what the young men, one and all,
Were wont to call him, for he ever
Would run at once on any errand
A man might send him. And this man
Now came to drive Odysseus forth
From his own house. And with wing'd words
He threatened him and said:
"Away
Out of this door, old man, or quickly
You will be dragged hence by the foot!
Do you not see they all are winking
To bid me drag you hence! And yet
I am ashamed to do it. Come!
Up and begone in haste before
Our quarrel comes to blows." Then sternly
Laërtes' crafty son, Odysseus,
Looked on the man and said:
"Strange fellow,
Naught have I done by word or deed
To harm you, and I grudge you not

What men may give you, though their gifts
Be great indeed. Here in this doorway
Is room for both of us; you need not
Grudge other men their share. You seem,
Like me, a beggar: heaven alone
Can give man wealth. Yet have a care,
Go not too far, now, and defy me
To use my fists, lest, doing this,
You rouse my anger and I make,
Old as I am, your breast and lips
Moist with your blood. So should I get
More peace to-morrow, for I think
You nevermore would then dare enter
The hall of great Laërtes' son,
Odysseus."

Then in anger thus
Spoke up the beggar Irus:

"Look you!
This glutton here prates glibly on
Like an old wife who tends an oven,
But it will be an evil turn
I soon shall do him. I will smite him
With these two fists of mine and drive
His teeth out of his jaws and strew them
Upon the earth, like teeth of swine
That steal the grain. Come, gird you, then,
That all men here may look on us
And see our struggle. Can you hope
To fight a younger man?"

So each
Enraged the other there upon
The polished threshold, just before
The lofty doorway. And there now
Mighty Antinoüs perceived them
And laughed with joy and called aloud
To all the wooers:

"Friends, such fortune
Has never come before, such sport
As heaven has sent this house! This stranger
And Irus are at strife and dare
Each other to a fight. Come, then,
Make the match quickly!"
So he spoke,
And all sprang up and came with laughter
And gathered round the ill-clad beggars.

Then thus spoke up Eupithes' son,
Antinoüs:
"Now hearken well,
Proud wooers, while I speak my mind;
There lie here, close before the fire,
Two paunches of slain goats, both filled
With blood and fat and set aside
Till supper-time. Now let the man
That wins the fight and proves the better,
Step up and take the one he will.
And he, besides, shall ever after
Share in our feats, and we will suffer
No beggar but this man alone
To come among us begging."
So
He said, and all were pleased. And then,
With a shrewd thought at heart, Odysseus
Thus spoke to them:
"An old man, friends,
Broken with hardship, has no hope
Against a younger man. And yet
My hungry belly, working evil,
Drives me to bear his blows. But come,
And swear you all a mighty oath

That no man shall give help to Irus
And strike me with a heavy hand
And foully, and so make me yield
To him by violence."
So said he,
And they all swore then, as he bade them;
And when they all had sworn, and duly
Accomplished all the oath, then thus
Telemachus, the mighty lord,
Spoke up before them:
"If your heart
And lordly spirit, stranger, urge you
To drive this fellow hence, fear not
Any Achæan here. The man
Who strikes at you, must fight with many.
I say this as your host. These lords,
Wise-minded men, agree."
He spoke
And all approved.

And now Odysseus
Girt up his rags about his waist
And showed his thighs, good to behold
And mighty, and a man could see
His breadth of shoulders and his breast
And his strong arms. For now Athene
Came to the shepherd of his folk
And rounded out each limb. And all
The wooers stared amazed, and one
Would whisper to his neighbor:
"Soon
This Irus will be only what
Is left of Irus! He will get
An evil fate of his own seeking!

Look what a thigh it is that shows
Under the old man's rags!"
So spoke they.
Sorely the heart of Irus then
Was stirred within him, but the servants
Girt him by force and dragged him forward
Helpless with fear, for all his flesh
Was trembling on his limbs. Then thus
Antinoüs rebuked him, saying:
"Better it were, you lumpish braggart,
That now you were no more—nay, better
You never had been born, if thus
You tremble and are so affrighted
At facing this old man here, broken
With hardships he has borne. Nay, this
I say to you; and as I say
It shall be done: if this man win
And prove the better, I shall cast you
Into a black ship, and shall send you
Hence to the mainland, to that dread
Slayer of men, King Echetus,
And he will, with his cruel sword,
Cut off your ears and nose, aye, tear
Each organ from its root and toss it
Raw, for the dogs to eat!"
So said he,
And Irus at these words, felt terror
Lay hold upon his limbs. But forward
They led him to their midst, and there
Both stood with lifted hands.
And now
Odysseus, great, long-suffering, pondered:
Should he now smite so hard that life
Should leave the body as it fell,

Or should he strike the man but lightly
And stretch him on the earth?
It seemed,
As thus he pondered, better far
To strike him lightly, lest the wooers
Should know who he must be.
Now both
Raised hands to strike. And Irus struck
Odysseus first, on the right shoulder,
But on the neck below the ear
Odysseus struck him and he drove
The crushed bones inward; the red blood
Poured from his mouth. Bleating he fell
Flat in the dust and gnashed his teeth
And beat his feet on earth.
The wooers
Lifted their hands on high and laughed
Till they were near to death: Odysseus
Then seized on Irus by the foot
And dragged him through the door, and further—
Even to the court and outer gate,
And there he set him up and propped him
Against the courtyard wall and thrust
His staff into his hand and spoke
With wing'd words, saying:
"Sit you here,
And scare off dogs and swine. Seek not,
A wretched thing like you, to lord it
O'er wanderers and beggars. See
You find not a worse fate!"
So said he,
Then round his shoulders cast once more
His wretched tattered scrip, held up
By a poor twisted cord. And so

Back to the door he went and there
He sat him down. And all the wooers
Laughing with joy passed in and spoke
With words of greeting:
"Now may Zeus
And all the other deathless gods
Give you, old stranger, all you wish
And all your heart desires, for you
Have stopped this greedy knave from begging
About this town of ours. We soon
Will send him over to the mainland
To Echetus, the king, the slayer
Of every mortal man!"
So said they,
And great Odysseus at this omen
Was glad at heart. Antinoüs
Set the great paunch before him, filled
With fat and blood. And from the basket
Amphinomus took cakes of bread
And gave him these and drank to him
From a gold cup, and said:
"Our welcome
To you, our aged guest! May you
Find happiness henceforth, though now
You are the prey of many an evil."
Then spoke and answered shrewd Odysseus:
"Amphinomus, you seem in truth
A man of wisdom. Such a man
Your father was, for I have heard
Of Nisus of Doulichium,
Of the great fame he won for worth
And riches too; and you, they say,
Are this man's son. Sober and grave
You seem, so I will speak my thought.
Hear now, and heed me well:

Of all
That earth brings forth, naught is more helpless
Than man himself, of all the beings
That breathe and move on earth. . . .
Lo, I
Was once held prosperous among men,
But many a wicked deed I wrought,
Led on by pride and power, and trusting
My father's and my brother's aid.
So let no man in aught defy
The law of heaven, but in silence
Accept whatever gift the gods
May send upon him.
Yet I see
The wooers plotting in this house
New deeds of wickedness: they waste
Its master's wealth, and to his wife
Deny due honor. And yet now
Not long, I say, shall he be absent
From friends and native land. Already
Indeed he is at hand. So pray
Some god may lead you home before
You face him here when he returns
To his dear native land. For never
Shall he and these men meet, I fear,
Without sore bloodshed, when once more
He comes beneath this roof."
So said he,
And took the honeyed wine, and poured
Libation forth, and drank and gave
The cup again into the hand
Of that great lord. So off then went
Amphinomus across the hall
With drooping head, and heavy sank
His heart within him, and his soul

Foreboded evil. Yet not thus
Might he escape his fate. Athene
Held him in fetters: by the hand
And spear of strong Telemachus
He must fall smitten.
So he turned him
And once more sat down in the chair
Whence he had risen.

Now the goddess,
Keen-eyed Athene, moved the mind
Of wise Penelope, the daughter
Of good Icarius, to go
And show herself before the wooers
Assembled in the hall, and open
Each wooer's heart to love, and win
More honor for her son and husband.
She laughed, she knew not why, and called
Her nurse and spoke:
"Eurynome,
My heart now longs, as ne'er before,
To show myself before these wooers,
Hateful though they may be. And I
Would speak a word, too, to my son;
Better it were for him to keep
Apart from all this throng of wooers,
Men who can prate fine words, the while
Their hearts plan mischief."
Then thus answered
Eurynome the housewife, saying:
"Indeed, my child, all this you say
Is wisely spoken. So go tell
Your son this word, nor keep it hidden.
But bathe your body first and brighten
Your cheeks with oil, nor go forth thus,

With cheeks still stained with tears. So hasten:
Evil is worse for endless weeping.
Already now your son is grown
To what you prayed the gods you might
Some day behold him, meet to aid you,
A bearded man."
Then thus replied
Prudent Penelope:
"Nay, do not,
Eurynome, now bid me bathe
My body and anoint it. They
That dwell upon Olympus, brought
My beauty to its end that day
When he went hence and sailed to sea
With all his hollow ships. Yet bid
My maidens come and stand beside me
There in the hall. I cannot go
Alone among the men, for this
Would bring me shame."
So said she. Quickly
The aged woman went her way
Through all that hall to tell the maids
And speed their coming.
But the goddess,
Keen-eyed Athene, now contrived
Another plan. She shed sweet sleep
Upon Icarius' daughter,
And back she sank upon her couch
And slept, and every joint was loosed
As there she lay. And while she slumbered,
The goddess gave immortal gifts
That the Achæans who beheld her
Might marvel at the sight. For first
She brightened her fair cheeks with beauty

Of the immortals: so the goddess
Anoints herself, crowned Cytherea
When she goes forth to join the Graces
In their fair dance. And taller yet
And fuller to behold she made her.
And whiter too than is the whiteness
Of new-sawn ivory.
And then,
Her work thus done, off sped the goddess.
And forth from out the hall there came
Her white-armed maidens, drawing near
With sound of voices. Then sweet sleep
Released her, and she passed her hands
Across her cheeks and said:
"Now surely,
Unhappy though I be, sweet slumber
Has wrapped me fast. Alas, I would
That spotless Artemis might give me
A death as soft, even now; and then
I should no more in grief of heart
Wear out my days, longing in vain
For my dear lord's rare worth; for he
Was ever best in all, the first
Of the Achæans."
So she spoke,
And down she went from her bright bower,
But not alone, for by her side
Went her two maidens. So she came,
This stateliest of women, down
Among the wooers and there halted
Against a pillar that upheld
The massive roof. Before her face
She held her gleaming veil: a maid
Stood on each side.

And now the wooers
Felt their knees weak with love, their hearts
Trapped in love's magic; and each prayed
To hold her in his arms.
And now
To good Telemachus, her son,
She spoke and said:
"Your mind and judgment,
Telemachus, serve you but ill.
Nay, when you were a boy, far better
You judged what was befitting. Now,
When you are grown to man's full measure,
When any stranger who might see you
Would think you, from your height and beauty,
The son of some great lord—why now
Your mind and judgment quite forsake you!
For what a thing it was befell
Here in this hall—that you should let
A stranger be so treated! What—
Can this befall here? Must a stranger
Who sits here in our hall, meet harm
Through cruel violence? Take heed
Lest shame come on you, and disgrace
Before all men."
Then thus replied
Discreet Telemachus:
"Dear Mother,
I blame you not for anger. Yet
Clearly my heart both sees and knows
The better way and worse. I once
Was but a child and knew not: now
I have no power to bring about
What wisdom bids me do. The wooers
Press round me and with evil plans,
Disturb me; there is none to help me.

And yet this fight between the stranger
And Irus, ended not as pleased
The wooers—for the stranger proved
The better man. Ah, now, O Zeus,
Athene, and Apollo—this
I would might come to pass: that those
Who gather here to woo, might go
Like Irus, with dropped heads, defeated—
Pass forth like him from house and courtyard,
And that the limbs of each were loosened
As his, as there alone he sits
Against the gate, with hanging head,
Like any drunkard, and can stand not
Upright upon his feet, nor go
Wherever home may be, for loosened
Are all his limbs."

And now to her
Eurymachus thus spoke, and said:
"O daughter of Icarius,
Prudent Penelope, could all
The Achæans in wide Argos see you
As you now stand here, still more wooers
Would feast within your hall to-morrow,
For you surpass all other women
In height and beauty and in wisdom
And calm control."

Then thus replied
Prudent Penelope:

"Alas,
Eurymachus, but all wherein
I once excelled in form and face,
The gods laid waste that day the Argives
Embarked for Ilium, for with them
My husband went away, Odysseus!

Would he might come again to watch
Over my life here; better far
Would be my fame, and fairer. Now
I can but suffer. Such the evils
Some power from on high has sent
For my affliction. But I know
This well: that when he left this land
He took my right hand by the wrist
And grasped it hard, and said:
'Dear wife,
I cannot hope that all these men—
These well-mailed warriors of Achæa
Will come home safe from Troy. The Trojans
Are mighty warriors, men say,
Who hurl the spear and draw the bow
And drive swift chariots. Such men,
When war stands balanced, will decide
A battle's ending. So I know not
If God will bring me back, or if
I bide there captive. On you here
Must lie the care of all. Remember
My father and my mother left
Here in their home and care for them
As you do now, yet kindlier still
When I am far away. Hereafter,
When you shall see our son is grown
To be a bearded man, then wed
What man you will, and leave this home
That now is yours.'
Even so he spoke,
And all is now accomplished: soon
The night will come when hated marriage
Must fall on me, now lost forever,
For Zeus above has taken all

My happiness away. Yet this
Strikes sorest to my heart: no wooers
In all the world have ever wooed
As these men woo; for men who seek
To wed a great lord's daughter, each
Contending with his rival, bring
Their cattle with them and fine flocks,
And feast the maiden's friends and give her
Fair gifts besides. Never before
Have wooers wasted a man's substance
With no return."

So spoke she. Glad
Was shrewd Odysseus then, to see
How she drew gifts from each, and witched
Their hearts with honeyed words, her mind
Still set on other ends.

Then spoke
Antinoüs, Eupithes' son:
"O daughter of Icarius,
Prudent Penelope, should any
Of the Achæans choose to bring
Gifts hither, take them. It looks ill
If one refuse a gift. Yet never
Shall we, I tell you, ever go
Hence to our lands, or anywhere
Out of this house, till he who proves
The best of the Achæans, makes you
His wedded wife."

Antinoüs
Spoke thus; his words pleased all, and each
Sent forth his servant to bring thither
The gifts he offered. One page brought
Antinoüs' gift, a fair great robe
Wrought all in colors. Twelve gold clasps
It had, with curving tongues. And next

They brought in, to Eurymachus,
A chain of gold most finely fashioned
And bright with amber as the sun.
Then to Eurydamas two servants
Came bearing ear-rings, and from each
Hung three deep-gleaming drops, and brightly
It flashed in beauty. And a servant
Came from Peisander's house and brought
A necklace of rare worth. Each lord
Of the Achæans brought her hither
Some lovely gift.
So to her room
This noble lady passed, with maidens
Bearing the precious gifts.

Now turned
The wooers to the dance and sought
Delight in song, and waited thus
The fall of evening. And when darkness
Came on their mirth, as evening fell,
Forth straightway in the hall they set
Three braziers to give light, and laid
Dry wood, well seasoned, newly cleft,
High upon each, and touched to this
Splinters of flaming pine; and maidens
Kept them all bright, the serving maids
That served long-suffering Odysseus.
Then thus the noble, wise Odysseus
Spoke, saying:
"Maidens, ye that serve
A master far away. Go now
Up to the room above where waits
Your noble lady. Go and sit
Beside her there and twist your thread

And cheer her heart, or set your hands
To card the wool. For I will see,
That these have light here: though they choose
To linger till the dawn appear
Upon her shining throne—they still
Shall find me equal to the task;
I can bear much and long."
So said he.
But at his words the maidens laughed
And cast their eyes on one another,
And then the fair-cheeked maid Melantho
Spoke up in rude reviling. She
Was Dolius' child: Penelope
Had reared her and had dealt with her
As her own daughter, giving her
Each trifle her heart craved. But she
Cared naught, in that light heart of hers,
For all her mistress' grief. She took
Eurymachus to be her lover,
And was his mistress. It was she
Now spoke and thus rebuked Odysseus
With words of insult:
"Cracked indeed
Those wits of yours must be, poor stranger,
For you will not go hence and sleep
At the smith's house or in a place
Where all may lodge. No, you come here
And make long speeches. Has your pride
Driven you mad because you mastered
That beggar Irus? Have a care:
A better man than Irus soon
May rise to meet you. His strong fists
Will dabble you with blood in plenty
And drive you from these doors!"

Then sternly
The wise Odysseus looked upon her
And said:
"Now will I go at once,
You shameless dog, and tell your master
Telemachus how you have spoken.
And he will on the instant slay you
And rend you limb from limb."
So said he.
His words drove thence the frightened women.
They hastened through the hall; each felt
Her knees grow weak with fear; he spoke,
Each knew, too truly. He meanwhile
Stood there beside the flaming braziers
And kept them blazing bright, yet ever
His eyes kept watch on all, and still
He brooded in his heart on aims
That should not miss their mark.
Not yet
Would great Athene have the wooers
Cease from their stinging insults. Deeper
The pain must pierce into the heart
Of good Laërtes' son. So now
Eurymachus began to speak
And jested rudely at Odysseus
And roused the rest to laughter:
"Hear me,
All ye that woo that noble lady,
For I will speak as my heart bids me
Within my bosom: never surely,
Without some god to aid, this man
Came to Odysseus' house! Look, now—
For from him now shines forth the light
Of burning torches—from his head

That shines without a trace of hair
To mar its brightness."
So he said,
And thus spoke on to great Odysseus—
To him who once took Troy:
"Now, stranger,
If I would take you, would you like
To be my laborer, far out
Upon my lonely farm? The pay
Is good enough. Your task would be
To gather stones for walls and plant
My spreading trees. There I would give you
Food for the year, aye, clothes to wear,
And sandals for your feet. And yet
I fear you now have learned bad ways:
You would not choose to work. Nay, rather
You wish to beg about the town
And get yourself more food to fill
Your greedy belly."
Then thus answered
The wise Odysseus:
"Would we two
Might have a match, Eurymachus—
A match to find the better worker,
In springtime, say, when days are long,
Out in deep grass, and I should have
A curving sickle, and yourself
Another like it. We might then
Try out our strength till evening's end,
Aye, strive on without food, so long
As grass was left us.
Or I would
That we had oxen we must drive,
The best of oxen, big of body,
Deep-hued, well-fed with grass, alike

In size and power and with strength
That never weakens. And I would
We had a field, a full four acres,
Before us thick with clod all lying
Fit for the plough. Then you would see
If I could cut a long, clean furrow
Before me as I went.
Or would
This might befall:—that Cronus' son
Might stir up war against us now,
From whence he willed! Ah, give me then
A shield and two good spears, and fit
A helmet to my head, and quickly
You would behold me with the first,
Full in the battle's front. Aye, then
You would not speak in idle jest
About my belly. For your words
Are proud, your heart is hard. You think
You are a great man and a mighty—
For you encounter here few men,
And these of little worth. But think you,
What if Odysseus should come home
To his own land again! Ah, then
These doors, though wide they are, would be
Too narrow for you as you flee
Forth through the porch!"
So spoke Odysseus,
And angrier yet within his heart
Now grew Eurymachus, and sternly
He looked on him, and thus he spoke
In wing'd words:
"I will do you hurt,
You wretched fellow, for you dare
Before these lords to speak forth boldly,

And feel no shame. The wine has seized
Upon those wits of yours, or else
Your mind is ever thus! You speak
But empty nonsense."

So he said,
And snatched a stool. Straightway Odysseus
Bent down beside Amphinomus,
Low as his knees, fearing the blow
Aimed by Eurymachus. It struck
The cup-bearer's right hand. His urn
Fell ringing to the earth. He groaned
And back he fell, flat in the dust.
Then through that shadowy hall the wooers
Raised angry clamor, and one said
As to the next he glanced:

"I would
This stranger had gone wandering
To some worse end before he entered.
He would not then have brought such tumult
Into our meeting. Here we quarrel
About a beggar! And we get
No joy from the good feast; for evil
Now has its hour."

Then thus spoke out
Mighty Telemachus:

"Alas,
Bewildered men, you speak like madmen.
You show too plainly you have feasted
And drunken well. Some god has stirred
Your minds to madness. Come, and now
That the good feast is o'er, go home
And lay you down to sleep as quickly
As your hearts will. Yet I would drive
No man out of this hall."

He spoke;
But all the wooers bit their lips
And sat there silent, marvelling
That he had spoken out so boldly.
Then thus Amphinomus before them
Spoke up and said:
"Friends, at a speech
So justly spoken, no one surely
Would yield to anger or reply
In bitter words. Let no one here
Mistreat the stranger—nay, nor any
That serve within this house, the home
Of great Odysseus. Let him now
Who pours the wine, put in each cup
Wine for libation. Let us pour
Libation to the gods above,
Then homeward to our rest. We leave
This stranger in Odysseus' hall:
Telemachus shall give him care,
For it was to his home this man
First found his way."
He spoke: his words
Pleased all who heard. And now a lord,
Molius of Doulichium,
Mingled a bowl of wine. He served
To all in order, and they poured
To the blest gods and drank the wine
As sweet as honey. When they thus
Had poured forth the sweet wine, and drunk
To heart's desire, then each man went
To his own home and quiet slumber.

BOOK NINETEEN

THERE IN THE HALL REMAINED ODYSSEUS
STILL PLANNING WITH ATHENE'S AID
DEATH TO THE WOOERS. AND NOW QUICKLY
He spoke in wing'd words to his son
Telemachus:

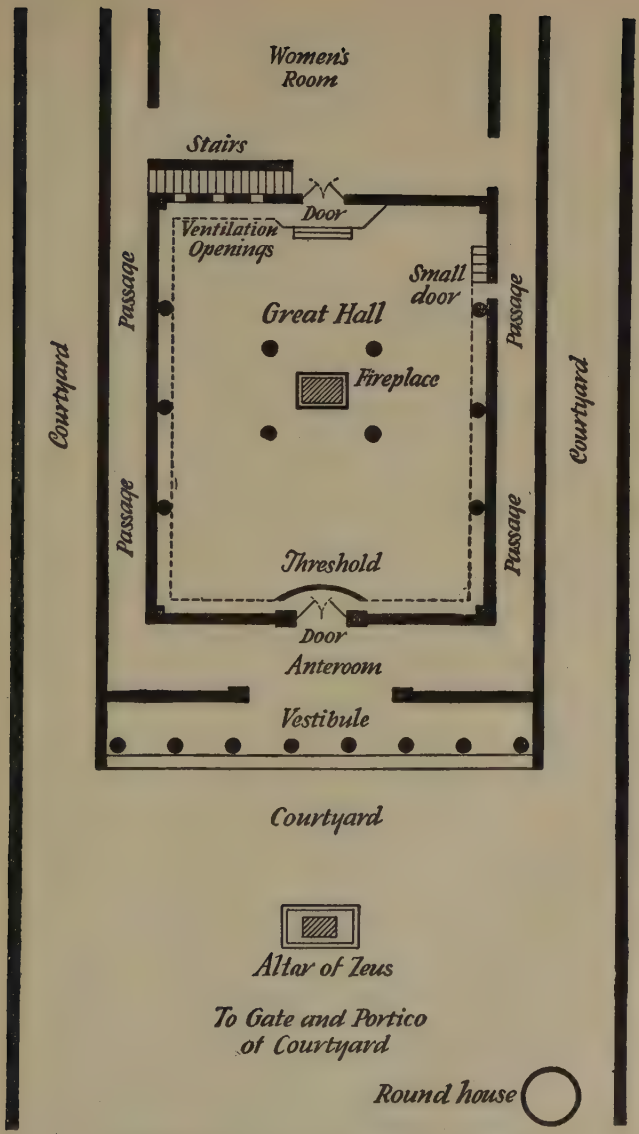
"Now we must lay
These tools of war, Telemachus,
Away and out of reach. And when
The wooers look for them and ask
Where they are gone, then answer softly,
Deceiving them: 'I laid them safe
Out of the smoke, for they are now
No longer like the arms Odysseus
Left with us long ago, when first
He went away to Troy, for now
They are all tarnished where the breath
Of fire has touched them. And this thought—
A grave thought, too—some god has sent
Into my mind: you might, perhaps,
When hot with wine, break forth in quarrels.
Men might give wounds, and shame the feast
And all your wooing. The sight of iron
Stirs men to strife.' "

So spoke Odysseus,
And at his words Telemachus
Gave heed, and called his aged nurse
Good Eurycleia, and he said:
"Good mother, keep, I pray, the women

All in their room, for I would lay
Safely within the inner chamber
My father's arms which lie uncared for
About the house, since he has been
Away from home. The stain of smoke
Now shows upon them. I have been
A heedless child, but I would now
Set them where not a breath of fire
Can ever touch them."
Then replied
The good nurse Eurycleia:
"Alas,
I would, my child, you could take thought
For this good house of yours, and think
How best to keep it safe and all
The wealth within it! But who now
Will go with you to bear the light
While you are working? For you choose not
To let the maids come forth to light you."
And wise Telemachus replied
And said to her:
"This stranger here
Shall do it. I will let no man
Who eats my bread, stand idle—nay,
I care not whence he comes!"
So said he.
His words, unwing'd, remained with her.

And now she closed and bolted fast
The doors of that great hall. Then up
Odysseus sprang, with his good son
Beside him, and they quickly bore
Into the inner chamber, helmets
And studded shields, and pointed spears.

And now before them moved Athene
Bearing a lamp of gold that shone
With fair and wondrous light. And quickly,
Beholding this, Telemachus
Said to his father:
"Father, now
My eyes behold a wondrous thing,
For, to my eyes, around the hall,
The walls, the alcoves deep and fair,
The beams of pine, the lofty pillars,
All shine before me, as if lighted
With flaming fire. Surely some god
Is with us here, some one of those
That hold Olympus."
And thus answered
Prudent Odysseus:
"Silence! Master
The thought within your breast, nor question.
Such is the wont of the high gods
That hold Olympus. Go you now
And lay you down to sleep, and I
Will stay here and will stir to wonder
Your mother and her maids, and she
Will weep and question me of all."
So said he, and Telemachus
Went through the hall, up to his chamber.
There by the light of blazing torches
He laid him down as was his wont
When sweet sleep came on him. And here
He lay, awaiting sacred dawn.
But in the hall remained Odysseus,
Still planning with Athene's aid
Death to the wooers.



PROBABLE PLAN OF ODYSSEUS' HOME

From her room
Now came the wise Penelope,
And she was fair as Artemis
Or golden Aphrodite. Close
Beside the hearth they set her chair
Shining with ivory and silver; . . .
A great fleece ever lay upon it.
And here sat wise Penelope.
Now from their room the white-armed maidens
Came to their tasks: they bore away
All the uneaten food, the tables,
And all the cups whence the proud wooers
But now had drunken. And they emptied
The braziers of their dying embers
And cast these on the ground, and heaped
New wood in them, enough to light
And warm the hall.
And now Melantho
Yet once again reviled Odysseus:
"So, stranger, you must still disturb us,
Wandering about the house by night
And spying on the women! Come,
You vile thing, hence! Be glad your fortune
Has given you one good meal. Beware
Lest quickly with a blazing brand
Men beat you from our door!"
Then sternly
The wise Odysseus frowned upon her
And said:
"Alas, strange woman, why
Should you assail me in such anger?
Is it since I am foul and wear
Vile garments, and go begging round
About the city? These are things
I needs must do. All wandering men

And beggars are like this. Yet I
Was once a rich man among men
And dwelt in a proud house. I gave
To every wanderer, nor asked
Whence he was come, or what his need.
And I had servants without number,
All that can make life good for men
And spread their fame for wealth. But Zeus,
The son of Cronus, snatched all from me,
For so he willed.
And you, too, woman,
Look you lest some day you shall lose
All that bright beauty wherein now
You shine above these maids. Beware
Of this too, lest your mistress' anger
Be roused against you, or Odysseus
Come home again! Fate still leaves open
A door for hope. Or if indeed
He now has perished and shall never
Return again, he has a son,
By Phœbus' grace, Telemachus,
Worthy his father. Not a woman
Here in this house, who does foul deeds,
Escapes his eye, for he is now
Too old to be deceived!"
So said he;
And wise Penelope heard all,
And called the maiden and rebuked her
And said:
"Alas, vile girl, as shameless
As any dog! Your evil doings—
And great they are—have none of them
Escaped my sight. Upon your head
The guilt shall lie. Full well you know—
You heard it from my mouth—that here

I bade this stranger come, to ask him
For tidings of my lord, for now
My heart is sad indeed."
So said she;
Then to Eurynome she spoke,
The first among her women:
"Come,
Bring a bench hither, and lay a fleece
To cover it; and here the stranger
Shall sit and tell his tale and heed
What I shall say: it is my wish
To ask him questions."
So she said.
Straightway a servant brought a bench,
Well-polished, with a fleece upon it,
And there long-tried Odysseus sat.
And now the wise Penelope
Began and said:
"This first, O stranger,
I fain would know: what man are you?
And of what land? Who are your kin
And what your city?"
Then in answer
Spoke shrewd Odysseus:
"No man, lady,
Of all the mortal men that dwell
Upon unmeasured earth, can blame you.
Your fame is spread as wide as heaven.
Even a king whom all men praise,
Who rules, in fear of God, a folk
Many and great, upholding justice,
Can win no greater fame. For ever
Beneath his kindly rule, the earth
On its dark soil bears wheat and barley,

The trees bend low with fruit, the flocks
Breed sturdy lambs, the sea yields fish,
And all his people prosper. Ask me
Of what things else you will, since I
Am in your house, but do not ask
My race or native land, or fill
My soul with still more suffering
By waking memory. For many
A sorrow I have known. And yet,
Here in another's house, I would not
Sit weeping and lamenting. Sorrow
Grows only worse through endless weeping.
Nay, one of these maids here, or you
Might blame me, saying that my eyes
Swim thus in tears because the wine
Lies deep about my wits."

Then answered
Prudent Penelope and said:

"Alas,
O stranger, but now all wherein
I once excelled, in form or face,
The gods laid waste that day the Argives
Embarked for Ilium; for with them
My husband went away, Odysseus!
Would he might come again to watch
Over my life here: better far
Would be my fame, and fairer. Now
I can but suffer. Such the evil
Some power from on high has sent
For my affliction. So I give
But little heed to wanderers
Or suppliants or heralds serving
The people's need, but ever long
After Odysseus, wasting ever
My heart away.

These men would hasten
My marriage day, so I must spin
A skein of trickery. And first
Some power whispered to my heart
That I should build me in my hall
A great loom, and should weave me here
A robe, a garment rich and wide.
So then I said to all:
'Young men
Who come to woo me—this I pray you:
Though great Odysseus now lie dead,
Forbear to urge this marriage. Wait
But till this robe I weave is finished—
I would not have its threads all wasted!
This is a shroud for lord Laërtes
When the dread doom of death shall take him
And leave long sorrow. I must do this
Lest some Achæan woman blame me
In my own land, if he should lie
Without a shroud, who once was lord
Of wealth so great.'
So then I spoke,
And their proud hearts agreed. And so
Each day I wove at my great web,
But every night I bade them bring
Torches to light me, and unravelled
All I had wrought by day. And thus
Three years I did, unseen, and ever
Deceived the wooers. But at length,
When the fourth year came round, my maids,
Ungrateful, like base dogs, betrayed me.
The wooers came and caught me. Harshly
They railed against me. So, compelled,
And through no will of mine, I brought
That weaving to its end. And now

I can no longer put off marriage
Or shape me a new plan. My parents
Urge me to marry, and my son
Grows angry that these men devour
His very livelihood, for now
He knows what passes: he is now
A man indeed, and fit to watch
The fortunes of his house, a man
Whom Zeus grants honor.
Yet, I pray you,
Tell me the race from whence you come,
For surely you were never born
Of rock or ancient oak!"
Then thus
Answered the shrewd Odysseus:
"Mistress,
Most honored wife of great Odysseus,
Laërtes' son—what, must you still
Ask me, unceasingly, to tell you
Whence I am sprung? But I will tell you,
Although you make my grief far greater
Than that which now I bear. So ever
It must be in the world when one
Is far from home as long as I,
Forever roaming, sad of heart
The cities where men dwell. But listen,
For I will tell you what you ask
And seek to know:
There is a land
That men call Crete. Far off it lies
Over the wine-dark deep, a land
Fair, fertile, girt with sea. . . .
Its king,
Deucalion, was my father. I
Am known as Æthon. In that land

I saw Odysseus and I gave him
The gifts one gives a guest, and brought him
To my own home. And there with kindness
I welcomed him and gave him freely
Of what I had. . . . And there twelve days
He dwelt with me, for from the north
The wind blew strong: no ship might lie
Near to the land. Then the wind ceased
And he put forth to sea."
So said he,
Making full many a falsehood seem
Like truth itself. And as she listened,
Her tears fell, till it seemed her flesh
Would melt with sorrow. As the snow
Melts on the lofty crests of mountains,
When the east wind has come to melt
The snow the west wind strewed, and rivers
Are flooded with the thaw—even so
It seemed that her fair cheeks were melting,
So many tears she shed, bewailing
Her husband, who was sitting there
Close by her side!
And then indeed
Odysseus' heart was filled with pity
At his wife's weeping. Yet he kept
His eyes beneath his eyelids steady
As horn or iron, and with craft
He hid his tears from sight.
But now,
When she with many a tear had taken
Her fill of sorrow, once again
She spoke and answered:
"Now I mean
To try you, stranger. I would know
If you in truth received my husband

As guest in your own hall, and all
His noble comrades with him there
As you have said. So come now—tell me
What clothing did he wear? How looked he?
And tell me too of his companions
Who followed after."

Thus then answered
The wise Odysseus:

"Noble lady,
This is a hard thing to tell rightly
After so long a time, for now
Full twenty years have gone their way
Since he set forth and left my land.
Yet I will tell you how my heart
Still sees his picture. Great Odysseus
Then wore a cloak of purple wool
In double fold. Upon it shone
A brooch of gold: two clasps it had,
And thus its front was carved:—a dog
Held with its paws a dappled fawn
Struggling, and gripped it in its jaws;
And all who saw it marvelled how,
Though wrought of lifeless gold, that dog
Held the fawn gripped, and strangled it,
While, striving to escape, the fawn
Still struggled with its feet. I marked
His tunic, too, that shone as bright
Upon his body as the skin
That gleams upon a sun-dried onion,
So smooth it was, and shining like
The sun itself. And many a woman
Gazed at him wondering. And this
I say besides; mark well: I know not
If he was wont to wear this clothing
At home, or if some comrade gave it

When he embarked in his swift ship,
Or if some host had given it him,
For he was loved by many, few
So loved as he. And I myself
Gave him a sword of bronze, a cloak
With double fold, of fairest purple,
And a fringed tunic, and so sent him,
With love and honor, on his way
In his good ship. There was a herald
Who followed him, an older man,
And I will picture him—a man
Stooping of shoulder, dark of skin,
With curling hair, and he was named
Eurybates. This man Odysseus
Honored o'er all the rest, for well
Their minds were mated."

So he spoke,
And once again he waked in her
The need of weeping, for she knew
So well each token that Odysseus
Told her so clearly. But at length
When she had had her fill of sighs
And weeping, then once more she spoke
And answered:

"From this moment, stranger,
You who have been a sight for pity,
Shall be beloved and honored. I
It was, with my own hand, who gave him
Those garments you have told of. First
In my own room, I folded them
And fixed upon them the bright brooch,
That precious jewel. Yet I never
Shall greet him now, returning hither
To his own land. Evil the fate
That bore hence, in his hollow ship,

Odysseus to curs'd Ilium,
Of evil name."
And thus Odysseus
Answered her saying:
"Honored wife
Of great Odysseus, mar no more
Your lovely flesh, nor waste away
Your heart with weeping for your husband.
And yet I blame you not. No woman
But weeps to lose her lord, the man
She loved, whose children she has born—
Aye, even though he were far other
Than was Odysseus who, men say,
Is like the gods. But cease your weeping
And heed my words, for I will speak
Truth only and will hold back naught
Of all I lately heard: Odysseus,
They say, is near at hand and safe,
A living man, in the rich land
Of the Thesprotians. . . .
Long since
He would have been here, yet he hoped
To profit more by gathering
Fair gifts as he went wandering
Over the earth. For so Odysseus
Is ever, shrewd in turning all things
To his own gain, beyond all others—
No living man can match him. So. . . .
I say that he is safe. Already
He is at hand: no longer now
Will he delay and linger far
From friends and native land. Nay, more,
I add my oath. Be witness, now,
Zeus, highest of the gods and best,
And let this hearth of good Odysseus,

Where I now stand, be witness too
That now, this very year, Odysseus
Shall come here, aye, as this moon passes
And the new moon begins."
Then spoke
Prudent Penelope:
"Alas,
I would, O stranger, that your words
Might but be true. Then you would learn
My kindness to the full, and many
The gifts that I should give, and all
You met would call you happy. Yet
This thought is ever in my heart:
That thus it all must end—that he
Will nevermore come home. And never
Shall you find help upon your journey,
For in this house there dwells no master
To rule men as he used to do,
And help the stranger on his way
Or welcome him, an honored guest.
But come, you maidens, bathe his feet
And spread his bed for him, with cloths,
Bright rugs, and cushions. Let him rest
There warmly till the dawn appears
Upon her golden throne. Then early
Bathe and anoint him well and seat him
Beside Telemachus within
To wait his meal. And ill shall fare
The man who with an evil heart
Dares vex this stranger; never here
Shall he find profit, though this grieve
His spirit sorely. How, indeed,
Could you, O stranger, think of me
As better than the rest of women
In thought and prudent wisdom, if,

Here in my hall, I let you sit
And eat your meal unkempt and clad
In pitiful garments. A man's life
Is short indeed. If he be cruel,
With hatred in his heart, all men
So long as he shall live, will call
Sorrow upon his head, and all
When he lies dead, will mock his name.
But if a man be kind and blameless
And live a blameless life, then strangers
Will bear his name abroad through all
The world of men, and many a man
Will tell his worth."

Then thus in answer
Spoke wise Odysseus:

"Honored wife
Of good Laërtes' son, Odysseus,
These rugs and cushions bright of hue
Are hateful to me from the day
I first left, in my long-oared ship,
Crete's hills behind me. Let me rather
But lie as I have lain before
Through sleepless nights. For many a night
Upon a rough bed I have lain
And waited for the holy dawn
On her bright throne. And I care naught
To bathe my feet: I would not have
One of these women here, these maids
That serve you in the house, lay hand
Upon my feet—unless there be
Some ancient woman, one whose heart
Is tried and steadfast, who has borne
Such sorrows as have I—if any
There be like this, it would not grieve me
To let her touch my feet."

Then answered
Prudent Penelope:
"Indeed,
Dear stranger, there was never stranger
Who came from far lands to my home,
So wise as you are, or so dear,
For all you say is wisely spoken.
I have an aged woman here.
Her heart is prudent. It was she
Who in his childhood nursed and tended
My luckless lord and took him up
In her own arms the very day
His mother bore him. And this woman,
Though weak with years, shall wash your feet.
So rise now, trusty Eurycleia,
And wash this stranger's feet—a man
Old as your master. Aye, Odysseus
May be already as this man,
With aged hands and feet: men soon
Grow old in evil fortune."
So
She spoke, but the old woman hid
Her face between her hands and wept
Hot tears and said in piteous words:
"Alas for my poor child! And I
Can find no way to help him. Surely
Zeus hated him before all others,
Though well he feared the gods. For never
Did mortal man so offer up
To Zeus, the lord of thunder, thighs
So fat and fine, or hecatombs
Worthy as those he offered, praying
That he might come to calm old age
And bring his valiant son to manhood.
Yet Zeus has utterly cut off

The day of his return! It may be
Women have mocked him too, in homes
Of strange lords far away, when he
Came under their proud roofs, as these,
The she-dogs, mocked at you! And rightly
You would avoid their insolence
And taunting words, and would not suffer
Such hands to wash you! So my mistress,
Icarius' daughter, bids me do it,
And willingly I shall. So I
Will wash your feet for her sake, aye,
And for your own sake too, for deeply
My heart is moved with pity. Now,
Mark well the words I say: full many
A stranger has come hither, tried
By weary travel, but not one,
I tell you, have I ever seen
So like Odysseus, for in face,
In voice, in feet—you are as even
Odysseus' self."

Then answered he,
The shrewd Odysseus:

"So, old woman,
They all say who have seen us both.
We two are much alike, as you
Yourself were quick to see."

So said he,
Therewith the aged woman took
The shining bowl they ever used
To wash the feet: first into it
She poured cold water freely, then
She added hot.

Meanwhile Odysseus
Was sitting by the hearth, but quickly
Turned toward the darkness, for the thought

Now rose within his mind, she might
When she should lift his foot, behold
The scar and know it, and then all
Would come to light.
And now she drew
Nearer her master and made ready
To wash his feet. And straightway then
She knew the scar. It was the scar
A boar's white tusk made long ago
Upon a day Odysseus went
To far Parnassus, there to see
Autolycus and his sons. This prince,
His mother's father, was a man
Of rarest worth, for he surpassed
All mortal men in thievery
And making of false oaths, for Hermes,
The god, had given him these gifts,
For he had offered him choice thighs
Of lambs and kids. So Hermes ever
Was willingly his helper. Now,
So it befell, Autolycus
Once came to Ithaca, that land
Of fertile fields, and there he found
His daughter had a son, a child
But newly born. And after supper
Good Eurycleia laid the child
Upon his knees, and called upon him,
Saying: "Autolycus, now choose
A name to give your child's dear child.
Long have we prayed for him."
Then answered
Autolycus and said:
"Now, daughter,
And you, her husband, give this child
The name I tell you. I come hither

In hatred, holding odious
Full many a man and woman too
Who dwell on fruitful earth. So let
Odysseus be his name. Some day
When he is a grown man and comes
To the great palace at Parnassus
Where dwell his mother's kin and where
My vast possessions lie—from these
I will give gifts to him and send him
Rejoicing on his way."

And so
Odysseus went, in hope to get
Those glorious gifts. Autolycus,
And his sons too, then bade him welcome
With hands and loving words. The queen,
His mother's mother, cast her arms
About Odysseus and she kissed
His face and both fair eyes. And now
Autolycus bade his two sons
Make the meal ready, and they heeded
Their father's bidding. . . . There all day
Until the sun went down, they feasted,
Nor did a man there lack delight
In that well-ordered feast. But now,
When the sun sank and darkness came,
They laid them down, and on them fell
The gift of sleep.

But when there shone
The dawn with rosy fingers, forth
They set upon the hunt; first came
The hounds, and after them the sons
Of great Autolycus, and with them
Noble Odysseus. Up they climbed
On high Parnassus, the steep mountain

Covered with forests, and soon reached
Its high and windy clefts. And now
The sun first touched the fields below
As he arose and left the deep
Soft-flowing Ocean-stream. Then came
The hunters to a glen: before them
The hounds ran following the scent.
Autolycus' sons behind
Came hastening, and ever with them
Noble Odysseus went and held
His long spear ready.
Here there lay,
Deep hidden in his thickest lair,
A mighty boar. And to this place
No wet wind had the power to pierce,
Nor could the sun's bright beam break through it,
Nor could rain pass, so closely set
That thicket was, and under it
The fallen leaves lay deep.
Now came
From every side the tramp and clamor
Of men and dogs as they pressed onward.
And there, within his lair the boar
Stood waiting, facing them, at bay,
With bristling back and eyes of fire,
At hand and ready. First of all
Odysseus rushed against him, wielding
His long spear with his mighty arm,
Eager to smite.
But the wild boar
Struck quicker yet, as forth he leaped
With sidelong thrust. Above the knee
His tusk smote, and it tore its way
Deep through the flesh, and yet touched not
The bone within. And now Odysseus

Struck with his spear and smote the boar
On the right shoulder. Through him passed
The point of the bright spear. He groaned
And fell there in the dust, and life
Fled from his body. Then the sons
Of great Autolycus bound up
With friendly hands, Odysseus' wound
And stanched the dark blood with a spell,
And so they quickly came once more
To their good father's house. . . .
And now
As the old woman put her hand
Upon his leg, and laid the palm
Upon the scar, at once she felt it
And knew it well. She let the leg
Fall as it would. Down dropped the foot
Into the basin, and the bowl
Of copper rang aloud and tilted
Upon its side till all the water
Ran on the ground. Joy suddenly,
And sorrow, both together, seized
Upon her heart. And her two eyes
Were filled with tears. Her eager voice
Faltered, and on Odysseus' beard
She laid her hand, and said:
"Yes, truly,
You are Odysseus, my dear child,
And yet I knew not it was you
Until I felt the wound that told me
It was my master."
So she spoke,
Glancing toward Penelope
To let her know her own dear lord
Was there beside her. But her mistress
Could neither meet her glance nor know

That she was there—Athene turned
Her thoughts afar. Swiftly Odysseus
Groped for the woman's throat and clutched it
With his right hand; then with the other
He drew her close to him and said:
"Good mother, why are you so eager
To bring me ruin? It was you
Who nursed me long ago and held me
To your own breast. And now I come,
When twenty years are past, far struggling
Through many perils, once again
To my own land. Then since you now
Have learned my secret, since some god
Put knowledge in your breast—be silent,
Nor let one person here be wiser.
Or—so I tell you now, and so
It shall befall—when God shall bow
These haughty wooers to my hand,
I will not, though you be my nurse,
Have mercy on you in that hour
When in my halls my hand shall slay
Those other women!"

And then answered
The prudent Eurycleia:

"Child,
What word is this that now has passed
The portal of your teeth? You know
How steadfast is my soul, a spirit
That naught can shake. I shall stand firm
As stubborn rock or iron. Aye,
And this too I will say; and hold it
Well in your heart. If ever God
Bow to your hand these haughty wooers,
Then I will point you out the women

Who do you shame here in these halls,
And those who bear no blame."
Then answered
The wise Odysseus, saying:
"Mother,
Why should you tell me of these women?
There is no need of this. For I
Will watch them for myself and learn
The heart of each. But keep this all
In silence: leave the end to heaven."

Even so he spoke, and the old woman
Went from the hall to bring more water
To wash his feet: for all she brought
Was spilled upon the ground.
And now,
When she had washed him and anointed
His body with smooth oil, once more
Odysseus moved his bench and sat
Still nearer to the fire, but covered
The scar beneath his rags. Then thus
Prudent Penelope began:
"It is a small thing, stranger, this
That I have yet to ask. For soon
There comes now the sweet hour of rest
When sleep's soft hold is on us—aye,
In spite of all our grief. Yet God
Has given me unceasing sorrow,
For all the long day my delight
Is but in sighs and tears, as ever
I see to my own tasks, and watch
The work of all the maids that serve me
Here in my house. And when night comes
And sleep lays hold on all, I lie
Sleepless upon my bed: sharp cares

Come crowding to my suffering heart
And stir me to new tears. My soul
Is even as Pandareus' daughter,
The nightingale, who sings her song
In the fresh green of leaves, and ever
Sweetly she sings when spring is new;
And where the leaves upon the trees
Grow thickest, there she sits and pours
The many-voiced and ever-changing
Flood of her music, and laments
Her dear child, Italus, whom she,
Unknowing what she did, once slew
With the bronze sword. Even as her song,
So wavers my torn soul, divided
This way and that. For shall I still
Dwell with my son here, watching all
To keep it safe—this wealth of mine,
My servants, and this high-roofed house,
Respecting so my husband's name
And what men say? Or must I yield
At last and follow home that man
Of the Achæans who best woos me
And offers the most gifts? While yet
My son was young and lacked man's wisdom,
He would not have me wed and leave
My husband's house. But since he now
Is grown to manhood and full stature,
He prays me leave this house and go
To my own home, so sorely vexed
His heart is by these wooers here
Who waste his substance.

But now come:
Hearken, I pray, a dream of mine
And tell its meaning.

Here I keep
A flock of geese that pluck their grain
From water in a trough, and well
I love to watch them. And I dreamed,
Down from the mountains came an eagle,
A mighty bird with curving beak,
And broke the neck of every one
And slew them all. And so they lay there
Heaped all about the house, while he
Rose up to heaven's pure air.
And I
Cried out then in my dream, lamenting,
And fair-haired maidens of Achæa
Came flocking round me as I wept
With piteous tears because the eagle
Had slain my geese.
And now once more
The eagle came, and there he sat
Upon the jutting ridge-pole. Thence
He spoke and with a human voice
Restrained my weeping:
'Nay, take heart,
Daughter of famed Icarius;
This is no dream but very truth
Which you shall see fulfilled. The geese
Are these, your wooers. I, myself,
Who seemed but now an eagle—I
Am your own husband, come again
To bring dread doom to all that woo you!'
So spoke he. Then sweet sleep released me:
I looked about me and I saw
The geese there in the court, and all
Were eating grain there by the trough,
As they had done before."

Then thus
Answered Odysseus:
"Noble lady,
To read this dream aright, take heed
You do not wrench it from its aim
To some new meaning. For Odysseus,
His very self, here tells you plainly
How all shall be fulfilled. He shows
Destruction comes upon the wooers,
On each and every man: not one
Escapes that death and doom."
Then spoke
Prudent Penelope and answered:
"Stranger, there come to us, in truth,
Dreams that perplex us, hard to read,
Nor are the things that these foretell
Always fulfilled for man. Two gates
There are through which our fleeting dreams
May come to us—the one of horn,
The one of ivory. Those dreams
That as they come forth, pass the gate
Of carven ivory, deceive us
With tales untrue; but those that pass
Forth through the gates of polished horn,
All these shall be fulfilled: some day
Man's eye shall see them. Yet my dream,
I fear me, came not thus, though welcome
My son and I indeed would find it,
Were it but so!
And this moreover
I say, and heed it well: for now
Already there draws near that morning
Of evil omen that shall part me
From my Odysseus' home. To-day
I hold a contest for the wooers,

The contest with the axes.* These,
He used, when he was here, to set
All in a row, twelve axes, ranged
Like frames to build a ship, and then,
Standing far off, he shot an arrow
Straight through them all. This is the trial
That I have set before the wooers.
He who most easily shall bend
The bow with his two hands and shoot
His shaft through those twelve axes—him
I then will follow, and forsake
This house to which I came a bride,
A house so beautiful, so filled
With all that makes life good. I know
That oft hereafter, in my dreams,
I shall remember it."

And thus
Odysseus spoke:

"Delay no longer,
O honored wife of great Odysseus,
But hold here straightway in your hall
This trial with the bow. For here
Odysseus, with his ready counsel,
Will be at hand before the wooers
Can take the polished bow in hand,
And stretch the string and speed an arrow
Straight through the iron."

Then again
Prudent Penelope replied:
"If you were only willing, stranger,
To sit here in my hall and give me
Delight like this, then sleep would never
Fall on my eyes again. And yet
No man can live on without sleep

* See page 413 for the explanation of this use of the axes.

Forevermore, since for us mortals
The immortal gods have set a season
For everything upon this earth
That gives man grain. So now I go
Up to my room and there will lay me
Upon my bed, which now is only
A place of sighs and ever wet
With tears, shed since my lord Odysseus
Went hence to evil Ilium,
Ill-omened. There to-night I lie,
But you shall lie here in the hall.
So spread your bed here on the ground
Or let the maids bring bedding."
So
She spoke and to her shining room
She went her way, but not alone,
For all her maidens went beside her.
So mounting up into her bower
With all her maids, she laid her down
And wept her own dear lord Odysseus,
Until at last keen-eyed Athene
Shed on her eyes sweet sleep.

BOOK TWENTY

SO THERE ODYSSEUS LAID HIM DOWN
TO SLUMBER IN THE PORCH. HE SPREAD
A ROUGH HIDE ON THE GROUND, AND ON IT
Laid many a fleece stripped from the sheep
The wooers slew. And over him
As there he lay, Eurynome
Spread a warm mantle. So Odysseus
Lay sleepless, ever pondering
Evil against the wooers.
Now
Quick slipping through the hall, came women,
The light loves of the haughty wooers,
And laughed and made them merry. Sorely
His heart was stirred within him: long
He pondered in his soul and spirit
Whether to rush upon them then
And deal swift death to each, or wait,
And leave the wooers and their loves
This one last night. His soul within him
Growled in its anger, as a dog
That walks around her helpless whelps
And growls at every man she knows not,
Ready for battle. So his spirit
Now growled in anger when he saw
Their shameful deeds. And then he smote
His hand upon his breast, and thus
Rebuked his heart with words:
"This too
Endure, my heart, for you have borne
A thing more horrible, that day

When in his savage strength the Cyclops
Devoured your brave companions. Nay,
You bore that patiently and found
A trick to bring you from that cave
Wherein you thought to die."
He spoke,
Rebuking thus the heart within him,
And his heart heeded and abode
Steadfast, unfaltering. Yet ever
He tossed from side to side. As one
Who turns a paunch of fat and blood
Before a great and blazing fire
And rolls it to this side and that,
Eager to roast it soon—even so
Odysseus tossed from side to side
And ever pondered how his hands
Might seize upon the shameless suitors,
And he but one, and they so many.

And to him now Athene came
From heaven descending, and she wore
A woman's form and stood beside him
Close by his head, and thus she spoke:
"Why do you lie here still awake,
Unhappiest of men? This house
Is your own home, and with you here
Are your own wife and son—a son
Full many a man might pray for."
Then
Thus answering spoke wise Odysseus:
"All that you say is just, O goddess,
Yet still my heart within me ponders
How best to seize upon and punish
These shameless wooers, for I am
But one, alone, and these are thronging
Through all the house. And this thought too—

A grave one—fills my heart: if I
By help of mighty Zeus and you
Shall slay these men, then to what refuge
May I take flight? Pray tell me this,
And quickly!"
Then thus spoke the goddess,
Keen-eyed Athene, saying:
"Yours
Is feeble faith! For any man
Will trust his comrade, a mere mortal,
A common fellow, who knows nothing
Of wisdom from on high. But I
Am of the gods above, and ever
I am at hand in every peril
And watching over you. And this
I say and plainly: though there gathered
Against us fifty troops of men,
Of mortal warriors, all minded
To slay us in fierce strife, you yet
Might easily drive thence in safety
Their cattle and their goodly sheep.
So now let slumber when it will
Lay hold upon you. For to wake
And watch all night is evil. Nay,
From all these perils you shall soon
Come forth to safety."
So she spoke
And shed soft sleep upon his eyelids.
Then back the holy goddess went
To high Olympus.

Now as sleep
Laid hold upon him and released
His spirit from his cares and loosed
His weary limbs, even then there wakened

His faithful wife, and sat alone
In her soft bed and wept. And when
At last she had her fill of weeping,
Then thus she prayed:
"O Artemis,
Daughter of Zeus, drive now your arrow
Straight to my heart and take away
My life, this instant. Aye, or let
Some swooping storm-wind snatch me hence
And bear me far and set me where
The all-encircling Stream of Ocean
Runs to the sea. Even so the storms
Bore off Pandareus' daughters—
The snatching winds bore off those maidens
And made them slaves to the dread powers
That wait on vengeance. Would that so
The gods that dwell upon Olympus
Might blot me from men's sight, or would
That fair-haired Artemis herself
Might strike me down and let me pass
To that dread rest beneath the earth,
Still seeing in my heart, Odysseus;
For then I should not need to please
The heart of some new lord less worthy
Than him I love.
Yet this oft makes
Life's evils light to bear—that though
A man may weep all day, with grief
Heavy upon his heart—with night
Sleep lays its hand on him, for then
All is forgotten, good and evil,
When sleep once seals his eyes. Alas,
With me it is not so. Some power
Still sends me evil dreams. I saw
Here now, to-night, a man beside me,

Like him, aye, even as he was
When he went forth among that host,
And then my heart was glad. I said,
'This is no dream, but truth.' "
And now,
While she yet spoke, the dawn came forth
Upon her golden throne.

It chanced
That as his wife thus wept, Odysseus
Heard her voice plainly. In his breast
He pondered deeply, for it seemed
That she must know him and must now
Be standing by his bed. So quickly
He gathered up the robe and fleeces
Whereon he slept, and laid them all
Upon a chair within, and bore
The oxhide, then, forth through the door
And spread it on the earth. And thus
With hands upraised he prayed:
"O Zeus,
Great Father, if you gods once more
Have brought me home to my own land
Over the firm earth and the waters
Of the wide sea, though you have given
My fill of evil too—now grant,
If still your hearts look on me kindly,
That some one in the house may speak
A word of lucky omen! Grant me
Without the house, a second sign
From mighty Zeus himself."
So prayed he,
And all-wise Zeus hearkened his prayer.
Straightway he sent his thunder pealing
Down from his shining home, Olympus,

Out of the clouds on high. Odysseus
Heard it with joy.
And now there came
A word of lucky omen spoken
By one within, a woman grinding
The corn within the house, where stood
The millstones of that folk's good shepherd.
For here twelve women toiled to grind
The meal and flour that give men strength,
And all but one now slept, their meal
Being ground already, but she still,
Since she was weakest of them all,
Ceased not her task. But now she stayed
Her busy mill and spoke these words
Of fortune for her lord:
"O Zeus,
Father wide-ruling over gods
And men alike, loudly thou now
Hast thundered forth from starry heaven
Though not a cloud was seen. And surely
Thou showest in this a sign. So grant
Even for my poor sake, that this
Which I now say may be accomplished:
Grant that this feast the wooers hold
To-day here in Odysseus' hall
Shall be their last, their utmost! Aye,
Let those men who have worn my knees
To weakness with heart-breaking labor,
The while I ground their grain, now feast them
For the last time!"
So spoke the woman,
And great Odysseus then was glad
To hear her words of lucky omen
And Zeus' loud thunder. For he deemed

That vengeance soon would fall on those
That wrought oppression.

And now thither
Came gathering the other maids
That served there in the stately house
Of great Odysseus, and they kindled
Upon the hearth a lasting fire.
Then, like the gods, Telemachus
Arose, and put his clothes upon him,
Slung his keen sword about his shoulders,
And bound upon his shining feet
His sandals fair, then took in hand
His mighty spear, tipped with sharp bronze,
And came and stood upon the threshold
And said to Eurycleia:
"Have you,
Dear nurse, done the good stranger honor,
Giving him bed and food, or lies he
Neglected, without care? Such ever
My mother's way, for all her wisdom,
For of two mortal men she honors
The man of lesser worth: the better
She sends off without honor."
Thus
Replied wise Eurycleia:
"Do not,
My son, thus blame those who are blameless!
The man sat here and drank his wine
As long as he desired. He said
He did not wish for bread, for she
Asked him of this. And when his mind
Was moved toward rest and sleep, she bade
Her maidens spread a bed. But he,

Like a man utterly cast down
And out of fortune, would not lie
Upon a couch and under rugs,
But here upon an untanned hide
And fleeces of slain sheep he slept
Upon the porch, and over him
We cast a mantle."
So she spoke,
And forth then passed Telemachus,
His spear in hand, and after him
Two swift dogs followed, and he went
To the assembling-place to meet
The mailed Achæans.
Then thus called
Good Eurycleia to the women:
"Up and to work! You maids here, sweep
The hall and sprinkle it and straighten
The purple cushions on the couches.
You others, wash each table clean
With sponges and rinse out the bowls
And well-wrought cups. The rest shall go
For water to the well; and see
You fetch it quickly. For these wooers
Will not stay long without the hall.
No, they will come betimes. To-day
We make them a rare feast!"
So said she.
They heard and heeded. Twenty maidens
Departed to the well's dark waters;
The rest worked deftly at their tasks
About the house. And next there entered
The wooers' serving-men, and deftly
They cleft the logs. And now the women
Came from the well. And after them

In came the swineherd, and he drove
Three hogs, the best from all his pens,
And leaving them to stray and feed
In the fair outer court, he entered
And thus once more he hailed Odysseus
With friendly words:
"Do the Achæans,
Stranger, now look on you more kindly,
Or do they still, here in the hall,
Insult you as before?"
Then answered
The wise Odysseus:
"Ah, Eumæus,
I would the gods might now avenge
The insults and the insolence
Of men who do such deeds of sin
Here in another's house, yet feel
No touch of shame!"
And so they spoke,
One with the other. And now came
Melanthius the goatherd, driving
His goats, the best of all his flock,
Picked for the wooers' feast. Two shepherds
Came after him. He tied his goats
Within the echoing porch and thus
With words of insult, he again
Spoke to Odysseus:
"Must you, stranger,
Still come to plague us in this house,
Begging of each man! Will you never
Be gone out of our doors! We two
Shall never part in peace, I fear me,
Till we have tried our fists. You beg
Beyond all right and reason. Surely

There must be, somewhere in Achæa,
Some other feast!"
So spoke Melanthius,
But shrewd Odysseus made no answer:
He shook his head in silence, musing
On thoughts of evil.
And now came
A third to join them, that good master
Of men, Philœtius, and he brought
A barren cow and fatted goats
To feed the wooers. (Boatmen brought
These cattle over, those that ferry
Upon their way all men who come
To ask their aid.) He drove them in
And there beneath the echoing porch
He tied them; then drew near the swineherd,
And asked:
"Who, swineherd, is the stranger
New come here to our house? What people
Claims he for his? What is his race,
And where his native land? For surely
He bears him, though now out of fortune,
Like a king wont to rule. What wonder
The gods lay miseries on men
Whom they send wandering, when even
For kings themselves they weave such sorrows!"
So said he, then drew near Odysseus
And gave him his right hand in welcome
And said in wing'd words:
"Welcome hither,
Old man and stranger! May good days
Be yours hereafter, though you now
Are prey to many an evil. Alas,
Zeus, mighty Father, who of all
The gods above can be more cruel

Than thou art! For thou hast no pity
That men, whom thou hast brought to birth,
Are trammelled here in miseries
And cruel sufferings. Even now,
As I beheld this man, the sweat
Broke out upon me, and the tears
Sprang to my eyes, for then I thought
Upon Odysseus! For he too
Perhaps even now goes wandering
And clad in rags like these, afar
Among the men of earth!—if yet
Indeed he live, and see the sunlight!
And if he now be dead, be gone
Down to Death's house; alas, I say
For good Odysseus! It was he
Gave me this charge, to keep his cattle
When I was but a lad and dwelt
With mine own folk. And now his herds
Increase beyond all numbering: never
For any man have broad-browed kine
Yielded such harvest! But now strangers
Command me and I drive his cattle
For them to eat. They give no heed
To his own son, lord in this house,
Nor tremble at the avenging gods.
Already now their hearts are eager
To part among them the vast wealth
Of our good lord who left us. Ever
Within me, still my heart goes turning
About this question:
Base it seems,
While his son lives, to take his cattle
And go to some far land and dwell
There among strangers—yet far worse

To watch the herds of strangers here,
And sit and suffer. I would gladly
Have fled hence long ago and sought
Some other mighty king for master—
Since life here is too hard to bear—
But yet I ever think of him,
Unhappy outcast, how he yet
May come—I know not whence—to scatter
These suitors to their homes!"
Then thus
The wise Odysseus spoke in answer:
"Herdsman, you do not seem to me
A base man, or a thoughtless fellow.
I see your heart has wisdom. So
This I will tell you now: I swear it
With a great oath:
Be Zeus my witness,
First among gods, aye, and the table
And hearth of good Odysseus, whither
I now am come. While you are here,
Odysseus shall return, and you
Shall see him here, with your own eyes,
Slaying these wooers—those who now
Sit here as masters."
Then once more
The herdsman spoke:
"May Cronus' son
But bring your words to pass, O stranger,
For you will learn, when that day comes,
What strength is in me—how these hands
Of mine may serve at need!"
So also
Eumæus prayed to all the gods
That wise Odysseus might return

Once more to his own house. And thus
They spoke with one another.

Meanwhile
The wooers met and laid their plans
To bring upon Telemachus
Death and destruction. But now came
A bird upon their left, an eagle,
Loftily soaring, clutching fast
A trembling dove. And seeing him
Amphinomus spoke forth before them
And said:
"Alas, friends, for this plan
Of ours shall not succeed—this plan
To slay Telemachus. Far better
To turn us to the feast."
So said he.
His words pleased all, and so they entered
Noble Odysseus' house, and cast
Their cloaks upon the chairs and couches,
And slew in sacrifice great sheep
And sturdy goats, and slew besides
Fat boars and a picked heifer. Next
They roasted all the inward parts
And served them round, and in the bowls
They mingled wine. The swineherd passed
The cups among them, and Philœtius,
The master of his men, passed bread
In baskets fair. Melanthius
Poured wine, and all stretched forth their hands
To the good food.

With crafty purpose
Telemachus had told Odysseus
To sit far down the stately hall

By the stone threshold, and he gave him
A poor bench and a little table,
And sent him portions of the meat,
And wine in a gold cup, and thus
He said to him:
"Now sit you here
Among these men and drink your wine,
And I myself will ward away
The insults and the cruel hands
Of all the wooers. For this house
Is not a place that all men own—
This is Odysseus' house. He meant it
To be his own and mine. And so
You who come here to woo, now check
Your love of insult and of blows,
Unless it be you long for quarrel
And open strife."
So said he. All,
Biting their lips in silence, wondered
At his bold words. Then out before them
Antinoüs spoke:
"Hard though it be,
Accept in silence, ye Achæans,
What he has said, though he speaks out
In threats against us! Ah, had Zeus,
The son of Cronus, but so willed it,
We might ere this have put the fellow
To silence in the hall—this shrill
Maker of speeches!"
So replied
Antinoüs, but to his words
That other gave no heed. For thither
Now came the heralds, they that led
Up through the city streets the beasts

To offer to the gods; and all
The flowing-haired Achæans gathered
Within his shady grove to honor
The mighty archer-god, Apollo.

But they within roasted the flesh
And took it from the spits and sliced it,
And made a noble feast. And they
Who served it, made Odysseus' share
Equal to any there, for so
His son Telemachus had bidden.
But not so soon would great Athene
Have all these haughty wooers cease
Their stinging insults: deeper yet
The pain must pierce into the heart
Of good Laërtes' son, Odysseus.

Among the wooers was a man
Given to lawless deeds, Ctesippus,
Who dwelt in Samé. And he wooed,
Trusting in his vast wealth, the wife
Of great Odysseus far away;
And this man now arose and spoke
To the proud wooers:
"Hear me now,
You haughty wooers. Let your hearts
Heed what I say. This stranger here
Has now been served an equal share
With any of us. This is fitting:
Not seemly would it be, nor just
That any guest within these walls
Should lack his proper share! So come,
I'll give our guest a gift, and he
Will then have something for the maid
Who brings his bath, or any others

Who serve him here within these halls
Of great Odysseus."
So he spoke,
And from the basket where it lay
Snatched up a hoof, and hurled it at him
With his strong arm.
Odysseus saw
And quickly bent his head aside
And it sped by him. Bitterly
He smiled within his heart. The hoof
Flew on and struck the massive wall.
Then rose Telemachus and thus
Rebuked Ctesippus:
"Now, Ctesippus,
Lucky it was, for your own peace,
You did not hit our guest—aye, well
That he escaped your cast, or I
Had taken my sharp spear and run
Your body through. Your father then
Might save the cost of wedding you,
And bury you instead. Let no man
Do openly, here in this house,
A deed so unbecoming. Now
I see and understand men's deeds
Both good and evil: I have been
Till now a child. Yet we must still
Endure these deeds we see: our sheep
Are slaughtered and our wine is drunken,
Our bread devoured—yet it is hard
For one man to contend with many.
But see you do not, in your hate,
Do evil in my house. Nay, rather,
If you should seek to slay me here
With the bronze blade, this would I ask!

Better to die than thus to live
To see such shameful deeds—the stranger
Abused with violence, and women
Dragged rudely forth through the fair dwelling
To foul disgrace."
These words he spoke
And all sat hushed in silence. Then
At length spoke Agelaüs:
"Friends,
To answer what is said with justice,
One needs not bitter words or anger.
So let none harm the stranger, nay,
Nor any that do service here
In great Odysseus' house. Yet I
Would speak now to Telemachus
And to his mother a kind word,
And may it in the hearts of both
Find favor.
While your hearts still hoped
Odysseus might again return
To his own home, then none were angered
Because you waited and held off
These wooers in the hall. And this
Would have been wisest, could Odysseus
Have only turned him once more hither
And reached his home. But this, alas,
Is all too clear now—that he never
Will come again. So go you quickly,
Sit by your mother's side and tell her
What I now say—that she must marry
The man who proves the best and brings
The richest gifts. So you shall dwell here,
Happy in all your father's wealth,
And eat and drink at ease, while she

Goes hence to rule over the household
Of her new lord."
Then thus replied
Prudent Telemachus:
"Nay, now,
I swear to you, good Agelaüs,
By all my father's sufferings,
Who somewhere, far from Ithaca,
Lies slain or wanders, I will never
Do aught to stay my mother's marriage.
Nay, I will rather bid her wed
What man she will, and I will give
Gifts beyond numbering. Yet I shame me
To drive her forth out of this hall
Against her wish, and tell her plainly
She must obey me. God forbid
That this should ever be!"
So said he,
But now Athene stirred the wooers
To wild and unquenched laughter. Madly
She sent their thoughts astray. They laughed
As if with others' lips. The food
They ate seemed fouled with blood. Their eyes
Filled suddenly with tears: their hearts
Longed to cry out with grief. Then spoke
The godlike Theoclymenus:
"Alas, ill-fated men, what doom
Is come upon you? For now darkness
As of the night enshrouds your heads,
Your faces, aye, and lower yet,
Even to your knees. A wailing cry
Goes up like kindled flame; your cheeks
Are wet with weeping; all the walls
And fair recesses are besprinkled

With dripping blood. And all the court
And all the portico are thronging
With ghostly shapes that haste them down
To Hell through gathering darkness. Nay,
The very sun is quenched from heaven
And over all there lies a horror
Of deadly mist!"
Even so he spoke,
But they broke out in loud gay laughter,
Scorning his words. And thus then spoke
Before them all, Eurymachus:
"This stranger must be mad, this fellow
From a far country! Come, young men,
And guide him quickly through the door
Out to the open square, since here
He finds it dark as night."
Then answered
The godlike Theoclymenus:
"I do not ask, Eurymachus,
For any guide to help me hence.
I have my eyes and ears to guide me,
And my two feet; and in my breast
I bear a steadfast mind that stoops
To naught unseemly. So with these
To aid me, I go forth, for now,
I see, there comes upon you evil
No man here may escape, nor shun
The stroke thereof—not one of all
These wooers in Odysseus' house,
Who deal in insult and devise
Foul deeds defying heaven."
So said he,
And passed forth from the stately palace.

And now the wooers cast their glances

One on another, and they aimed
Their laughter at his guests, to anger
Telemachus; for thus some youth
Of haughty heart would say:
"No man,
Telemachus, could have worse fortune
With guests than you! For first, but look
Upon this filthy beggar here
Forever begging bread and wine,
Worthless for work or tests of strength,
A burden to the ground. And now
This other fellow rises up
And thinks himself a prophet. Nay,
Take my advice: it would be better
To cast such guests as these together
Into a well-oared ship and send them
Over to Sicily, for there
A good price might be got."
So, mocking,
The wooers spoke. Telemachus
Heeded them not but sat in silence
And watched his father, ever waiting
Until the time that he might lay
His hands upon these men in vengeance—
These shameless wooers.

And meanwhile
Prudent Penelope had set
Her fair chair opposite the door
And heeded all the words each spoke
Within the hall. With merry laughter
They bent them to the feast—a feast
Of sweet delight, and plentiful,
For many a beast they slew.

Yet never
Could any feast have less of joy
Than that they soon should taste—the feast
A goddess and a mighty warrior
Should set before these men who long
Had wrought such deeds of shame.

BOOK TWENTY-ONE

AND NOW IT WAS THE KEEN-EYED GODDESS
ATHENE PUT INTO THE MIND
OF WISE PENELOPE THIS THOUGHT:
That she should set before the wooers
Assembled in Odysseus' hall
The bow and the grey iron axes—
The means of contest, the beginning
Of death and vengeance.
So she went
Up the high stairway of her house
Bearing in her firm hand a key;
Curving it was and fair, of bronze
With ivory handle. On she went,
Her women with her, till she came
To the last room of all. Here lay
All her lord's treasures—gold and bronze
And well-wrought iron. Here too hung
His back-bent bow; its quiver with it,
Holding his arrows: in it still
Was many a deadly shaft. A friend
Had given him this, whom he had met
In Lacedæmon. . . . But Odysseus
Never would bear this bow abroad
When he set forth in his black ships
To wars across the sea. Here ever,
In memory of his friend, it hung
Stored in his house; but oft he bore it
In his own land.

And now she reached
The room she sought, the noble lady,
And there she halted on its threshold
Which, long ago, the craftsman smoothed
With skilful hand, and trued each line,
Jointed the upright posts, and fitted
The shining doors. Quickly she cast
The thong off from the hook and thrust
The key within and so pushed back
The bolts, her hand with steady aim
Guiding the key. And as a bull
Roars, grazing in the meadows, so
At the key's touch, those fair doors roared
And swiftly flew apart.
So onward
She passed to a raised flooring. Here
Stood chests wherein lay fragrant garments,
And here she stood and raised her hand
And from its peg took down the bow
Still wrapped in its bright case. And there
She sat her down, and laid the case
Upon her knees, and wept aloud
And drew her lord's bow forth.
And when
Her grief was satisfied with weeping,
Back to the hall and the proud wooers
She went, and bore the curving bow
And the full quiver; in it lay
Many a deadly shaft. And with her
Her women came, bearing a chest
Wherein was many a piece of iron
And bronze too, which her lord had used
Long since in contests. So she came,
This noble lady, to the wooers,
And took her stand close by a pillar

Of that great hall. Before her face
She held a fair-wrought veil, and thus
She spoke to the proud wooers:
"Hear me,
You haughty wooers, you who ever,
Eating and drinking, here assail
This house of ours, since now its master
Is long away. Yet this alone
You give as reason: that you wish
To wed me and to take me home
To be your wife.
Come, then, you wooers,
Here stands your prize! And here before you
I now set forth the mighty bow
Of great Odysseus, and the man
Who with his hands most readily
Shall bend it, and shall send an arrow
Through the twelve axes, he shall be
The man I follow; for I then
Will leave this house of my first bridal,
So beautiful, so filled with all
That makes life good! Always in dreams
I shall remember it."
So spoke she,
And bade Eumæus, the good swineherd,
Set forth the bow and the grey iron
Before the wooers. He with tears
Took them and set them down; the herdsman
Wept too, in his own place, to see
His master's bow. Then thus spoke up
Antinoüs, and rebuked them:
"Dullards,
Dolts from the fields! Your only thought
Is for the passing hour. Poor fools,
Why let your tears fall thus, to trouble

This woman's heart within her? Grief
Lies deep upon her soul already
For her dear husband's loss. Be silent!
Sit down and eat, or get you off
Without, to weep there. Leave this bow
Within, among us, that the wooers
May try the contest, a dread trial:
No light task will it prove, I think,
To bend that polished bow. For now
No man among us is so strong
As was Odysseus. I once saw him
Myself: well I remember him
Though I was but a child."
So said he,
But in his heart he longed to bend
The bow himself and send an arrow
Straight through the iron. Yet this man
Should be the first to feel the arrow
Of good Odysseus, of the man
He wronged now, sitting in his hall,
And urging on his proud companions.

Now spoke Telemachus before them
In might and honor:
Now, alas—
Zeus, son of Cronus, must have robbed me
Of all my wits. For my dear mother—
And she is wise indeed—now says
That she must leave this house forever
To follow a new lord. Yet I
With senseless heart, but laugh at this
And make me merry! Come, you wooers,
Here stands your prize, and such a woman
As is not found in all Achæa,
In holy Pylus—not in Argus

Nor in Mycenæ. But all this
You know already. Why should I
Thus praise my mother? Hold not back
With vain excuse, but bend the bow
And learn how this will end. I too
Would try the bow, for if I bend it
And send my arrow through the iron,
I need not suffer shame that now
My honored mother leaves our house
To follow a new lord, while I
Remain behind; for I should be
A man, then, able to perform
My father's glorious feats."
So said he,
And up he sprung full height and cast
His scarlet mantle from his shoulders,
And from his shoulders laid aside
His keen-edged sword. And first of all
He set the axes: one long furrow
He dug for all and laid it straight
With a stretched line, and stamped the earth
About them on both sides. And wonder
Laid hold on all who saw, so fitly
He set them up, though ne'er before
Had he beheld them. Then he went
And took his stand upon the threshold
And tried the bow. And as he strove
To bend and string it, thrice indeed
He made it tremble, and thrice stayed
To rest his strength, but still he hoped
To stretch the string and send the arrow
Straight through the axes. And he yet,
Straining the fourth time, might have strung it,
But now Odysseus shook his head
And stayed his eager strength. Then thus

Spoke the great lord Telemachus:
"Alas, must I, then, ever be
Worthless and weak! Or am I yet
Too young to trust these hands of mine
To win me justice if a man
Assails me unprovoked! But come,
You who are stronger; try the bow
And end the contest!"
So he spoke,
And set the bow aside, and leaned it,
The tip upon the ground, against
The firm, well-polished door, and leaned
The swift shaft by the bow and resting
Against its fair, curved tip. So then
He went once more back to the seat
Whence he had risen.
And now spoke
Antinoüs, Eupithes' son,
And said to them:
"Now rise, my friends,
And make the trial, one by one,
In order, left to right, beginning
Where first they pour the wine."
So spoke
Antinoüs, and his words pleased all.
And first Leiodes, Œnops' son,
Arose, their soothsayer, who sat
Farthest up hall, by the fair bowl
Wherein they mixed the wine, and hateful
Their ill deeds were to him: his heart
Loathed all the wooers; and he first
Lifted the bow and the swift shaft.
He took his stand then on the threshold
And strove to bend the bow. He could not,
For ere he did so, the rough strain

Wearied those hands of his, soft hands,
Unused to hardship. And he thus
Spoke to the wooers:
"No, my friends,
I cannot bend it. So let now
Some other take it. Many a man,
The best among us, this bow here
Shall rob of life and spirit. Aye,
Better it is to die than live,
Losing the prize that keeps us all
Gathered here waiting day on day!
For each man of us here now hopes
To wed Penelope, the wife
Of great Odysseus. But, when he
Has tried the bow, and learned the ending,
Let him seek out from the Achæans
Some other fair-robed woman, woo her
And bring her gifts. So will this lady
We woo here, wed the man who gives her
The richest gifts and wins, through fate,
The victory."
So said he, setting
The bow aside and left it leaning
Against the fair, well-polished doors,
And leaned the swift shaft by the bow
Against its fair, curved tip. Then back
He went and took once more the seat
Whence he had risen.
And now spoke
Antinoüs and rebuked him, saying:
"Leiodes, what strange words are these
That pass the portals of your teeth!
Wild words and terrible: it angers
My heart to hear you speak. For how
Could this bow rob our mighty lords

Of life and spirit—all because
You cannot bend it! Your good mother,
I clearly see, ne'er brought you forth
For feats like these, to bend the bow
And aim the arrow. Yet some man
Among the haughty wooers here
Shall bend it soon."
So spoke he. Then
He called Melanthius, the goatherd:
"Make haste, Melanthius, and kindle
A fire here in the hall, and set
A long bench by it, with a fleece
To cover it, and then bring hither
The great round cake of fat that lies
Within the house. So, after we
Have warmed the bow and rubbed the fat
Into its fibre, we young men
Shall try the bow and end the contest!"
So said he, and Melanthius straightway
Kindled a steady fire and set
A bench close by and spread a fleece
Upon it, and brought forth the large
Round cake of fat that lay within.
And so the young men warmed the bow
And made the trial. But not one
Could bend the bow, for far too slight
Their strength was for that task. Yet two
Still held aloof, Antinoüs
And great Eurymachus, the leaders
Among the wooers, of proved worth
In every feat.
And now there came
Forth from the house two men together,
Two serving men of great Odysseus,

Swineherd and herdsman. And Odysseus
Came forth close after them. And now,
When they all stood without the gate
Beyond the courtyard, then Odysseus
Spoke to them thus in gentle words
And said:
"Good herdsman, and you, too,
Swineherd—I have a certain secret
That I might speak. Now shall I tell it
Or keep it hidden? My heart bids me
Speak it out openly. Pray tell me,
What kind of men you two would prove
To aid Odysseus if he came
None might say whence, all suddenly,
Among us here, as if some god
Had brought him hither. On which side
Would you two fight—to aid the wooers
Or for Odysseus? Speak forth freely
As heart and spirit bid!"
Then spoke
The keeper of the kine and answered:
"O Father Zeus, but grant me now
This prayer of mine! Let but this man
Come home once more, and may some god
Soon guide him hither. Then you quickly
Would learn what strength is mine, how well
My hands obey at need!"
So too
Eumæus prayed to all the gods
That wise Odysseus might return
To his own home. And then Odysseus,
When he knew well the heart of each,
Once more spoke up and answered them
And said:

"It is myself you see
In my own home—returned at last
Now in the twentieth year, sore tried
By many a peril, once again
To my own native land. I know
You two alone, of all my servants
Long for my coming. Not one man
Of all the rest have I heard pray
That I turn hither and once more
Come safely home. So I will tell you
Clearly and truly what awaits you:
If God lay low beneath my hand
These haughty wooers, I will then
Find wives for you and give you wealth
And houses close beside my own,
And you, henceforth, shall be to me
As friends, aye, brothers, of my son
Telemachus. But come, for I
Will show a sign besides, a mark
Beyond mistake, that you may know me
And trust me in your hearts—the scar
Of the deep wound the boar once gave me
With his white tusk when on Parnassus
The sons of great Autolycus
And I went hunting."

So he drew
His rags from the great scar. And they,
When they beheld it and saw well
That all was as he said, burst forth
In weeping, and they cast their arms
Round wise Odysseus; lovingly
They kissed him on the face and shoulders,
And even so Odysseus kissed
Their hands and faces. And the sunlight

Would have gone hence and left them weeping,
Had not Odysseus stayed their tears
And said:

"Now make an end of sorrow
And loud lamenting, lest one come
Forth from the hall and see and tell
His tale to those within. But now
We must go in—not all at once
But singly, I the first, and you
Shall follow after. This shall be
Our secret plan: for all the rest
All the proud wooers, will refuse
To let me have the bow and quiver,
But, good Eumæus, you shall come
Straight down the hall and bring the bow
And set it in my hand. And tell
The women that they then must lock
The close-set doors that from their chamber
Lead forth into the hall. If any
Within then hear the sound of groans
Or outcries from the men without
In our great hall—let them not seek
To look forth from the door, but sit
And ply their task in silence. You,
Philœtius, bar with their bolt
The gates that shut the court: this trust
I lay on you, and see you knot
The lashing swiftly."

So he spoke;
Then passed into his stately dwelling,
And went and sat him in the seat
Whence he had risen, and soon after
Those others entered—the two servants
Of great Odysseus.

All the while
Eurymachus with busy hands
Was holding out the bow, and turned it
This way and that, striving to warm it
Before the blazing fire, yet never
Had he the strength to bend it. Deeply
He groaned in his proud breast, and thus
He spoke aloud in wrath:
"Alas,
Now here is grief for me and grief
For one and all. I do not grieve me
So much for the lost marriage, vexing
Though that may be, for other women
There are, and many, in Achæa—
In sea-encircled Ithaca
And other cities. Yet to think
That we in strength so fall below
Mighty Odysseus that we cannot
But bend his bow! Men yet unborn
Shall learn our shame!"

Then thus replied
Antinoüs, Eupithes' son:
"This is not true, Eurymachus,
And you yourself know why. This day
Is in our land the sacred feast
Of the great Archer. How may men
Then hope to bend a bow! Nay, set it
Aside in silence. For the axes—
Leave them to stand here; none, I think,
Will dare to come here to the hall
Of good Laërtes' son, Odysseus,
And bear them off! Come, let him now
That serves the wine, fill every cup
That we may make libation duly

And lay aside curved bows! But let us
To-morrow early, bid the goatherd,
Drive here to us the chosen goats
Of all his flock; and we shall offer
The thighs before the archer-god
Apollo, and then try the bow
And end the contest."
In such words
Antinoüs spoke, and all assented.
Then came the servants to pour water
Upon their hands; the young men crowned
The cups with wine and served to all,
But first they gave in every cup
A portion for libation. Now
When each man to his heart's desire
Had poured and drunken, wise Odysseus,
With crafty purpose spoke:
"Now hearken,
Wooers of our famed queen! A boon
I beg now of Eurymachus
And great Antinoüs—for rightly
He counselled that we now lay by
The bow and leave the gods to settle
The issue of the strife. To-morrow
Let God grant mastery as he will!
But give me now the polished bow
And let me try before you here
My skill and strength—whether there yet
Dwells in these supple limbs the might
That once was theirs, or if already
With wandering and want it now
Is brought to nothing."
So he spoke,
But when they heard him, all broke out
In furious anger, for they feared

That he might bend the polished bow.
Then thus Antinoüs rebuked him
And said:

"O wretched stranger, surely
Your wits have left you! Are you not
Content to eat at ease among us,
Men rightly proud, here where you miss
Naught of our feast, but hear our words
And noble speech? No other beggars
Or strangers—you alone—can listen
To all we say. It is the wine
Distracts you thus, the honeyed wine,
That often has brought grief to others
Drunk greedily and out of measure! . . .
And this I prophesy: if you
Shall bend that bow, then sore indeed
Shall be your sufferings, for no one
In all this land will ever hail you
With friendly greeting: we will send you
In a black ship to Echetus,
The king who murders all mankind;
Thence you shall not escape. So sit
And drink in peace, and do not try
To strive with younger men."

Then answered
Prudent Penelope:

"Unfitting
It is, Antinoüs, and unjust
Thus to deny the right of strangers,
Guests of Telemachus, who come
Here to this house. What, do you think
That if this stranger proves he rightly
Trusts his arms' strength and power, and bends
Odysseus' mighty bow—that he
Would lead me straightway to his home

And take me for his wife! The man
Has never in his inmost bosom
Had such a thought. Let none of you
Who sit at feast here vex your spirit
With thoughts like these. Never, I say—
Never could that befall."

Then spoke
Polybus' son, Eurymachus,
And answered:

"Wise Penelope,
Icarius' daughter, we have never
Once thought this stranger here would wed you,
For that could never be. And yet
We shame to think what might be said
By men and women—how some fellow,
One of the baser sort among us,
Should say: 'These men who came to woo
That great lord's wife were all too weak:
They could not bend his polished bow.
And yet another came, a beggar,
A vagabond—and he with ease
Bent the great bow and sent an arrow
Straight through the iron.' Even so
The tale will run, and this will bring us
Reproach forever!"

Then replied
Prudent Penelope:

"You cannot,
Eurymachus, win any honor
Here in this land by eating all
A great man's wealth the while you bring
Dishonor to his house. Why lay, then,
Such weight on the reproach! This stranger
Is big of body and well-built,

And is, he says himself, the son
Of a good father. Come, then, give him
The polished bow, and let us see
What he can do! For this I say,
And as I say, so shall it be:
If great Apollo grant his prayer
And let him bend the bow, I then
Will give him clothing—cloak and tunic—
And a sharp spear to ward away
Both dogs and men, and a good sword,
Two-edged, besides; and I will give him
Sandals upon his feet; and hence
I then will send him wheresoever
His heart and soul may wish."

Then spoke
The wise Telemachus and answered:
"Mother, no man of the Achæans
Has greater right than I to give
This bow or hold it back; no man
Of all that rule this craggy isle
Of Ithaca, of all that rule
The islands that lie off toward Elis,
The land of steeds—not one can stay me
And thwart my will, not though I choose
To give this bow, once and for all,
Into the stranger's hand and tell him
To take it where he will! But go
Now to your room. There busy you
With woman's proper work, the loom
And distaff; give your maids commands
And let them ply their tasks. A bow
Is matter fit for men—for all men—
But most of all for me, for I
Am master in this house."

And she,
Astonished at his words, went thence
Up to her room, and laid to heart
Her son's wise words. So she ascended
To her own room, among her maidens,
And wept her own dear lord Odysseus
Until at last keen-eyed Athene
Sent on her eyes sweet sleep.

And now
The swineherd took the bow in hand
To bear it to his lord. The wooers,
Beholding, each and all broke out
With clamor in the hall, and one
Of the proud youths thus spoke:
"Now where,
You worthless swineherd, are you taking
That curved bow? O you idle rascal,
I wish that those swift dogs you breed
Might eat you, off there all alone
Among your swine! Would but Apollo
Might grant us this!"
These words he spoke,
And in his fear the swineherd quickly
Laid the bow down where he was standing,
For many a man, through all the hall,
Cried out against him. Loudly then
From where he sat, Telemachus
Called, threatening:
"Go on, good father,
Take him the bow! But I shall teach you,
And soon, you must not take your orders
From every man. Now have a care,
Or—I am younger far—I'll chase you
Forth to the fields and stone you soundly

With many a stone, for I am surely
Stronger than you! Ah, would I were
As surely, stronger than these men,
These wooers in this house! For soon
Would I send some of them in sorrow
Off home, out of our house! Their deeds
Are all of evil!"

So he spoke,
And all the wooers laughed thereat
With merry laughter, and forgot
The bitter wrath they felt before
Against Telemachus. And now
Down through the hall the swineherd came
Bearing the bow, and by Odysseus
He halted, and he gave the bow
Into his hand. And then he called
Nurse Eurycleia from within
And said:

"Telemachus thus bids you,
Wise Eurycleia. Lock you now
The close-set doors between the chambers
And the great hall. If any woman
Hear there within the sound of groans
Or combat from the men without
In the great hall, let her not look
Forth from the door, but bide within
And ply her task in silence."

So
He spoke to her. His words unwing'd
Rested unanswered and she fastened
The doors of that fair hall. And softly
Philœtius sped forth from the house
And barred the gates of the walled court.
There lay, beneath the porch, the cable
Of a curved ship, of twisted fibre;

With this he firmly lashed the gates.
Then back he went and sat him down
Where he had sat before; and ever
He fixed his eyes upon Odysseus.

And now Odysseus held the bow
And turned it, side to side, and tried it
In every part, lest worms, the while
Its lord was far away, had eaten
Into the horn. And one who watched
Would say, quick glancing at his neighbor:
"This fellow must be used to bows,
A clever rascal. He may have
A bow like this laid by at home
Or studies how to make one. Look:
See how the idle beggar turns it
This way and that with ready hands,
Well tried in mischief!"
And another
Of the proud youths would say:
"May he
Meet ever such good luck as now
Will be his lot, when he shall fail
To bend the bow!"

So spoke the wooers.
But wise Odysseus, who had handled
That mighty bow, testing each part,
At once as easily as a man,
A singer, skilful with the lyre,
Stretches a string in place and fits it
To its new peg, and at each end
Makes fast the twisted gut—even so
With ready ease Odysseus bent
And strung that mighty bow.

He took it
In his right hand and tried the bowstring,
And at his touch it rang out loud,
Clear as a swallow's cry.
Then fell
A deadly dread on all the wooers,
And every face turned pale. Zeus sent
His sign from heaven in loud thunder,
And great Odysseus, who so long
Had suffered and endured, rejoiced
To hear this signal from the son
Of artful Cronus.
Now he took
A swift shaft in his hand: it lay
Before him, drawn, upon the table;
For in the hollow quiver yet
The rest lay waiting—as the Achæans
Ere long should learn.
And now he laid
The arrow in the rest, and seated
There on the bench, he drew the string
And the notched arrow. Straight he aimed,
And loosed the shaft.
And not one axe
Of all it missed. Through every one
From the first axe, that bronze-tipped arrow
Went speeding to the very last
And out beyond. Then thus Odysseus
Spoke to Telemachus:
"This stranger,
Telemachus, who as your guest
Sits in your hall, has not, you see,
Brought shame on you. I have not missed
The mark nor made a mighty labor
Of stringing the great bow. My strength

Is even as of old, nor fails me now
As these in insult deemed.
At last
The time is come, the destined hour
To bid these wooers sup with us,
Though yet it is full day! And we
Have sport for them besides—the dance
And twanging of the lyre, to crown
This coming feast!"
So spoke Odysseus,
And gave, with bended brows, the signal.
And, on the instant, his dear son
Telemachus girt by his side
His keen-edged sword and took his stand
Beside his father's seat, all armed
In glittering bronze.

BOOK TWENTY-TWO

NOW WISE ODYSSEUS STRIPPED AWAY
HIS RAGGED GARMENTS. UP HE SPRANG
TO THE GREAT THRESHOLD WITH THE BOW
And the full quiver, and poured forth
The swift shafts at his feet. Then thus
Before the wooers he spoke:
"So now
Ends this dread contest. And again
I aim, at a new mark, a mark
No man has hit before. And may
My aim be true, and great Apollo
Grant me the glory!"
So he spoke,
And at Antinoüs he aimed
His piercing arrow. Now this man
Was just then lifting to his lips
A fair gold cup of double handle
And held it high in both his hands
Ready to drink the wine. Of death
No thought was in his heart. For who
Could think that here among these men,
Sitting at feast, one man, alone
Among so many, though his strength
Were great indeed, could bring upon him
Dread death and fate's black end?
Odysseus
Took steady aim and drove the arrow
Straight to the throat: the keen point sped
Through the soft neck. The man sank down:
Sidelong he bent: out of his hand

As he fell smitten, dropped the cup;
Forth from his nostrils sprang the blood
In a thick stream. And as he fell,
He struck the table swiftly from him
With outthrust foot and strowed the food
Upon the ground, roast flesh and blood,
Defiling all.
And when the wooers
Saw the man fall, they rose in tumult
Through all the hall. Up sprang each man
Out of his place and ran about
Searching in terror every side
Of those strong walls; but there they found
No shield or warlike spear. And thus
They spoke, then, and in angry words
Rebuked Odysseus:
"This, O stranger,
Will bring you evil, thus to turn
Your shafts on men! Never again
Shall you compete in games, for death
Will smite you swiftly. You have slain
The first and foremost man of all
The youth of Ithaca. For this
The vultures of this land shall feed
Upon your body."
So they spoke,
Each man of them, for they as yet
Deemed that he slew the man by chance
Nor knew he willed the deed. Poor fools,
Who could not see that round them all
Death's cords were tightening.
But Odysseus
Spoke, frowning sternly on them:
"Dogs,
You told yourselves that I should never
Come back again to my own home

Out of the land of Troy. And so
You have devoured my house, have seized
My maids with outrage, and though I
Myself was living, sought like traitors
To woo my wife. You neither fear
The gods that dwell in the high heavens
Nor yet the wrath of man that ever
Follows with vengeance. Round you all
Death's cords are tightening!"

He spoke,
And pale fear seized them all. Yet one
Spoke up, Eurymachus, and answered:
"If this be you indeed, Odysseus,
The lord of Ithaca, now come
To your own home again, then just
Is all you say of those foul deeds
The Achæans here have done—full many
A wicked deed in your own hall
And many more afield. But he
Who lies there slain, Antinoüs—
This man alone should bear the blame
Of all these evils: it was he
Who urged us to such deeds.

It was not
Your wife alone he wished and sought for.
His mind sought other ends, but these
Zeus granted not. He hoped himself
To reign as king, over this land,
This ordered land of Ithaca,
But first he sought, lying in wait,
To slay your son. Now he lies slain
And justly so. So spare us, now.
We are your people. We will pay you
Out of the public cost for all

That we have eaten here or drunken
Within your halls—aye, every man
Will pay atonement—twenty oxen,
And bronze too we will give, and gold
To make your heart rejoice. Till then
No man can blame your anger."
Sternly
Then frowned upon him wise Odysseus
And said:
"If you, Eurymachus,
Should give me all your father owns
And all you own besides, and all
That you could get you anywhere,
By any means—I would not then
Withhold these hands of mine from slaying—
Not till the wooers pay in full
For every wrong their evil pride
Has wrought here. Now the choice is yours:
Fight here or flee—if any man
By flight can save himself from death
And destiny. Some, as I think,
Shall not escape sheer death!"
So spoke he,
And at his words their knees grew weak,
And weak their hearts within. And yet
Eurymachus once more spoke out
Before them all:
"Never, my friends,
Will this man stay his ruthless hand
Now that he holds the polished bow
And quivered arrows; but will stand there
On that bright threshold and will smite us
Till he has slain us all. So summon
Your spirit to the fight. Draw swords!

Hold up the tables as a shield
Against these shafts of death, and rush
Upon him swiftly, all at once,
Locked close together. So perhaps
We yet may thrust him from the threshold
And from the door, and so flee forth
And reach the town and there raise quickly
Our cry for aid. And then this man
Will soon shoot his last shaft!"
So said he,
And with these words he drew his sword,
Keen, double-edged, and rushed upon him,
Shouting a dreadful shout!
That instant
Noble Odysseus loosed his arrow.
It struck him in the breast and pierced it
Close by the nipple: in the liver
The shaft stood fixed. Out of his hand
His sword flew. Lifeless, limp, he sank
Across the table, and fell headlong,
O'erturning food and cup. His head
Beat on the ground in agony;
He writhed, and thrusting with both feet
Spurned back the chair and threw it over,
And dark upon his eyes then fell
The mists of death.
Amphinomus
Now rushed at glorious Odysseus,
Drawing his keen sword as he came
To drive him from the door. But swifter
Than he could strike, Telemachus
Cast his bronze-pointed spear, and smote him
Between the shoulders, through the chest.
He fell with a dull fall: his forehead
Struck flat upon the ground. And swiftly

Telemachus sprang back and left
The spear fast in the body, fearing
Lest, as he stooped to draw it forth,
Some one of them might rush upon him
And smite him thus.
So back he sped
To his dear father's side, and there
He stood and with wing'd words he said:
"Now, father, I will bring you hither
A shield, and I will bring two spears
And a good helmet all of bronze
Fitting your brows, and I myself
Will get me armor, and will arm
The swineherd and the herdsman; armor
Will make us safer."
Then replied
The wise Odysseus:
"Run, then, fetch them,
While I have arrows yet remaining
To hold our foemen off, or they,
When I am left alone, may drive me
Out of the doorway."
So he spoke,
And good Telemachus obeyed
His father's bidding. Forth he hastened
Up to the room wherein lay hidden
Those glorious arms, and thence he took
Four shields, eight spears, and four good helmets—
Brazen, with horsehair crests. And these
He bore with him, and quickly came
Back to his father's side. And first
Round his own body he girt on
The brazen mail, and then those two,
His servants, armed them like himself
In that fair armor. There they stood

Beside their lord, the wise Odysseus,
Ready of counsel.
Now so long
As he had shafts wherewith to hold
His foes afar, he still smote down
A wooer with each shaft; they fell there
One by another. But at length
The mighty archer's arrows failed him.
Then he set down his bow and leaned it
Close by a pillar of the hall
Against the shining wall's bright surface,
Then round his shoulders slung a shield
Of four-fold hide and on his head
He set a helmet, finely fashioned,
And terribly its horsehair crest
Nodded above it; and he took
Two bronze-tipped spears in hand.

There was,
It chanced, a postern door that pierced
The massive wall, just at the level
Of the great threshold of the hall.
Through this a man might reach the passage
That ran without, but this was barred
By well-joined doors. And here Odysseus
Bade the good swineherd take his stand
And keep good watch, for here alone
Might those within pass forth. And now
Thus to his comrades Agelaüs
Made plain his thought:
"Friends, might not one
Climb up and reach that little door,
And so pass forth and tell our people
And raise the cry for help? This man
Would soon shoot his last shaft."

Then answered
Melanthius the goatherd:
"Never
Can that be done, great Agelaüs.
It lies too near the fine great doors
That lead forth to the court, and hard
It is to pass these; for one man,
If stout of heart, might hold the passage
Against us all. But look, now—I
Will bring you from the upper room
Arms for each man, for there, I think,
Odysseus and his valiant son
Have stored the arms away."
So spoke
Melanthius the goatherd; straightway
He clambered up and through the holes
That aired the hall, slipped forth and reached
Odysseus' inner room. And thence
He chose out twelve good shields and spears
And helmets with high crests of horsehair,
And back he brought them all in haste
And gave them to the wooers.

Now
Odysseus' knees grew weak, and weak
His soul within him when he saw
The wooers girding on this armor
And lightly wielding in their hands
The heavy spears. He saw how great
A task now lay before them. Quickly
He spoke to brave Telemachus
With wing'd words, saying:
"Surely some one,
Telemachus, perhaps some woman
Within the house, is helping on

This evil battle we are facing—
Or it may be Melanthius!"
Thus
Prudent Telemachus replied:
"Nay, it is I have been at fault,
Father, and no one but myself
Should bear the blame, for it was I
Left open the close doors that shut
The upper room. Some spy of theirs
Has seen this all too quickly. Go, then,
Eumæus, close the doors and find
What woman did this thing, or if
It was, as I now guess, Melanthius,
The son of Dolius."
So they spoke,
One with another.
Now it fell
Melanthius the goatherd went
Up to the room a second time
To fetch fair armor forth. And there
The goodly swineherd saw him. Quickly
He spoke then to the great Odysseus
Who stood beside him:
"Great Odysseus,
Son of Laërtes, ever ready
In every need, look, now that man,
The cursed knave whom we suspected,
Goes to the room again! Now tell me
What I shall do? If I shall prove
The stronger, shall I slay him there,
Or shall I bring him here, to pay
Full penalty for all the deeds
Of sinful insolence that he
Has wrought within this house?"

Then answered
The wise Odysseus:
"Here now I,
With brave Telemachus, will hold
These haughty wooers in the hall,
Though furiously they charge us! Go,
Bind this man fast, and tie his hands
And feet behind his back, and fling him
Into the chamber. Then lash boards
Flat to his back and wind him well
In twisted ropes, and hoist him high
Upon the pillar, far aloft,
Even to the rafters. Leave him there
To hang still living, suffering
In frightful agony."
So said he.
They heard and heeded. Forth they went
Up to the room, and carefully
They kept them from the sight of him
That worked within. The man was now
Deep in the chamber's farthest corner
Seeking more armor, while the two
Stood by the doorposts on each side
Ready and waiting.
And at last
Over the sill the man stepped forth,
Melanthius the goatherd, bearing
A helmet in one hand; the other
Bore a broad shield, old, soiled with dust,
A shield that once the lord Laërtes
Had borne in youth, which now laying moulding,
Its straps all parted.
Then the two
Sprang on the man and seized him quickly
And dragged him by the hair, and brought him

Into the room and there they flung him
Down on the floor, shaken at heart,
And bound his hands, and lashed him fast
With cruel cords, as great Odysseus,
Long-suffering son of great Laërtes,
Had bid them do, and all his body
They wound with twisted rope and so
Hoisted him high upon the pillar
Even to the rafters. Then you thus,
Swineherd Eumæus, spoke, deriding:
"There shall you watch all night, Melanthius,
And soft shall be your couch, as soft
As you deserve! Sleep shall not keep you
From seeing new-born dawn arising
Gold-throned from Ocean-stream, aye, even
Just at the hour when you were wont
Hither to come, herding your goats,
Bringing the wooers in the hall
Their daily feast!"

So there they left him
Fettered in deadly bonds, and then
Put on their armor and closed fast
The bright doors after them and went
Back to Odysseus, their wise lord
Ready of counsel.

So they stood
Breathing fierce breath of battle, ready
Upon the threshold, four alone
While those who faced them in the hall
Were many, tried in arms.

And now
Before them suddenly appeared
Athene, child of Zeus; she seemed
In form and face like Mentor. Gladly

Odysseus saw her there and thus
He said to her:
"Now, Mentor, save us
From sure destruction! And forget not
Your friend and comrade, he who once
Did you good service. You and I
Are of one age."
So spoke Odysseus;
Yet well he knew it was Athene
Who leads to battle. But the wooers
Cried out across the hall in tumult
Reproving her, and first of all
Spoke Agelaüs:
"Let not, Mentor,
Odysseus with his wily words
Win you to fight against the wooers
And save his life. For I am sure
We shall, despite your aid, accomplish
The end before us. Then, when we
Have slain them both, father and son,
You too shall perish with them. So
Shall you pay dearly for the deeds
You hope to do here. Aye, your head
Shall pay the penalty; and then,
When with our bronze blades we have brought
That strength of yours to naught, we then
Shall seize on all your wealth, within
Your house or elsewhere; we shall join it
With all Odysseus' wealth and take it
To be our own. We shall not suffer
Your sons to dwell here in your house,
Nor shall your wedded wife and daughters
Be free to go about the streets
Of Ithaca."

These words he spoke,
And angrier then grew Athene
To hear him, and she angrily
Rebuked Odysseus, thus:
"No longer,
Odysseus, do you show to-day
The steadfast strength and manly spirit
That once were yours when for nine years
For noble, white-armed Helen's sake
You fought the Trojans, never resting
Day after day. And many a man
You slew in mortal battle—aye,
And it was by your plan we took
King Priam's wide-wayed town. And now
How can you here in your own home,
Among your own possessions, facing
These wooers here, stand sorrowing
That you must needs be brave! Nay, come,
Poor timid friend, stand by me: watch
What I shall do for you and see
When enemies press on, how Mentor
Repays kind deeds."
So spoke she. Still
She would not grant to him, as yet,
Full certain victory, but sought
Further to try his strength and spirit
And his brave son's. So up she darted,
Changed to the likeness of a swallow,
High up to the smoke-blackened rafters,
And rested there.
And Agelaüs,
Son of Damastor, now urged forward
The wooers to the fight, and with him
Eurynomous, Amphimedon,

And Demoptolemus: Peisander,
Polyctor's son, and Polybus,
Famed for his wisdom. These men stood
Highest in worth among the wooers
Who yet were left alive and battled
For life itself. The rest, the bow
And those thick-flying shafts already
Had struck with death.
And Agelaüs,
Son of Damastor, now spoke out
Before the wooers, and made clear
His thought to all:
"Now, friends, this man
Must stay his deadly hand, for Mentor,
For all his empty boasts, is gone,
And these are left alone, to hold
The open doorway. So now cast
All your long spears, yet not together.
Come, let six cast at once and learn
If Zeus will let us now lay low
Odysseus and win glory. Heed not
The others, so he fall!"
So said he,
And at his word all cast their spears
And mightily. But great Athene
Made them of no avail. One struck
A pillar that upheld the roof
Of the great hall; another smote
The firm-set door, and a third spear,
With ashen shaft and brazen head,
Drove deep into the wall. So now
When every spear the wooers hurled
Had missed its mark, then spoke Odysseus,
So sorely tried:

"Now, friends, I tell you
We too must cast our spears and aim them
All at that throng of wooers, men
Who madly long to strip our bodies
And add to their foul score."
He spoke,
And each of them took aim and cast
His keen spear at the man who faced him.
Odysseus with his flying spear
Struck Demoptolemus; his son
Smote down Euryades; the swineherd
Slew Elatus; and the good herdsman
Struck down Peisander. And they all
Fell there together and their teeth
Bit the broad earth. Back up the hall
Shrank all the wooers to the far
Sheltered recesses, and those others
Sprang forward and plucked forth the spears
From those that lay there slain.
Once more
The wooers then all hurled together
Their pointed spears, and mightily,
But great Athene made them all
Of no avail. For one but struck
A pillar that upheld the roof
Of the great hall; another smote
The firm-set door; and a third spear,
With ashen shaft and brazen head,
Drove deep into the wall. But one,
Amphimedon's long spear, struck lightly
Telemachus upon the wrist,
Grazing the skin; and now Ctesippus,
Sending his spear above the shield,
Just touched Eumæus' shoulder: onward
It sped and fell to earth.

Once more
The men who fought beside their wise
And crafty lord Odysseus, cast
Their keen spears all together, aiming
Into the throng. And now Odysseus,
Taker of Troy, struck with his spear
Eurydamas; Telemachus
Smote down Amphimedon; the swineherd
Slew Polybus, and the good herdsman
Struck, full upon the breast, Ctesippus,
And cried exulting:
"Clever son
Of Polytherses, ever apt
At insult, do not, after this,
Give way to folly and vain boasting.
Leave speeches to the gods, for they
Are mightier by far. I give you
This gift to pay you for the hoof
You gave my master, good Odysseus,
When he came hither, a poor beggar
In his own house!"
So spoke the herdsman,
Keeper of crook-horned kine. And now
Odysseus with his long spear met
In single fight Damastor's son
And wounded him. Telemachus
Smote with his spear Evander's son,
Leiocritus, full in the body,
And drove the bronze point through: the man
Fell, face to earth.

And now Athene
Held forth from the high roof the ægis
That brings men death. Then on their hearts
Came panic; through the hall they fled

Like kine some darting gadfly follows
And stings to madness in the springtime
When days grow long. And as the vultures
Come down from mountain heights and swoop
Upon the lesser birds that cower
Beneath the clouds and flit their way
Upon the levels, as they pounce
Upon them, slaying, where no help
Or hope of flight is found, while men
Look on and see the sport with gladness—
Even so these men came rushing down
Upon the wooers, and they drove them
Through all the house on every side
And smote them down. And horrible
Arose the groans of men who fell
With shattered heads, and all the floor
Was red with blood.

And now Leiodes
Rushed forward, and he knelt and clasped
Odysseus' knees and with wing'd words
Besought him thus:

"A suppliant,
I clasp your knees, Odysseus. Honor
And spare a priest. Never, I swear,
Have I in word or deed, done aught
To injure any woman here
Within your house. Nay, I have striven
To hold the other wooers back
When they would turn to wrong. But they
Heeded me not, nor ever stayed
Their hands from evil. They have met
Now, for their evil deeds, a fate
Most horrible. And must I, too,
Their priest and soothsayer, be slain
Though I have done no wrong? Alas,

Men have no grateful memory
Of good deeds past!"
Then sternly on him
Frowned wise Odysseus, and replied:
"If you as you declare, were priest
Among these men, then many a time,
Here in this very house, you prayed
That the sweet hour of my return
Should be denied me, and that she,
My own true wife, should go with you
And bear you children. And for this
You shall not now escape the sting
Of bitter death."
So spoke Odysseus,
And lifted in his hand a sword
That lay upon the floor, just where
The dying Agelaüs cast it—
And with it clove his neck asunder;
And even as he spoke, his head
Fell rolling in the dust.
And now
The son of Terpes, Phemius,
The minstrel whom the wooers forced
To sing before them, still was seeking
How he might shun black death. He stood
Close by the postern door; his hands
Held his clear lyre. . . .
And now he set
His hollow lyre upon the floor . . .
And he himself sprang forth and clasped
Odysseus' knees, and with wing'd words
Besought him thus:
"A suppliant,
I clasp your knees, Odysseus. Honor
And pity a poor minstrel. Sorrow

May seize you later if you slay
A singer who has made sweet music
For gods and men. Yet none but I
Has been my teacher. Heaven has filled
My heart with song of every kind,
And I would sing my lays before you
As to a god. So do not seek
To smite my head from me. Your son,
Your own Telemachus, will tell you
That not of my own will, nor seeking
For gain thereby, did I come hither
To sing my songs here in your house
While these men sat at feast. For they
Were mightier than I and many,
And forced me to their will."

So said he,
And the great prince Telemachus
Heard him and by his father's side
Thus quickly spoke:

"Nay, hold your hand,
Nor slay this man with your bronze blade,
For he is blameless. Let us spare, too,
Medon, the herald. For when I
Was still a child, here in our home
He had me ever in his keeping.
Spare him, unless Philœtius slew him
Or the good swineherd, or he fell
Before your hand as you swept raging
Through all the house."

He spoke, and Medon,
A man of wisdom, heard, for crouching
He lay beneath a chair, all hidden
In a raw oxhide, so escaping
From fate's black end. And now he quickly
Came from beneath the chair, and rose,

And cast the hide aside, and ran
Straight to Telemachus and clasped
His hands about his knees and spoke
Beseeching in wing'd words:
"Yes, friend,
Here I am now! So stay your hand,
And speak, I pray you to your father,
Lest in his strength he smite me dead
With his sharp sword in his great anger
Against these wooers—these who wasted
His wealth here in his halls, too foolish
To heed your words."
Then smiling spoke
The wise Odysseus:
"Have good courage,
For he has snatched you from your peril
And saved you. Lay this truth to heart:
Aye, and tell others: he who does
Good deeds will find far better fortune
Than he whose deeds are evil. Go you
Forth from the hall now. Sit you down
Out in the court, far from this slaughter,
You and yon minstrel, rich in music,
While in the house I do the work
I yet must do."
He spoke, and they
Passed quickly from the hall and sat them
Beside the altar of great Zeus,
Peering about on every side
In dread of death.

And now Odysseus
Went through the house and searched about
To see if anywhere remained
A man yet left alive and hiding

To shun black death. But he beheld
Them one and all, each man, all lying
In blood and dust, as thick as lie
The fish the fishers drag to shore
In nets of many a mesh, and draw them
Up the curved beach, out of the white
Foam of the breakers. On the sand
They lie, all longing for the waves
Of the salt sea. The sun shines forth
And takes their life away. So lay
The wooers, heaped one on another
Like fish poured from the net.

Then thus
Unto his son spoke wise Odysseus:
"Go now, Telemachus, and call
Nurse Eurycleia, for my heart
Holds something I would tell her."
So
Odysseus spoke. Telemachus
Heeded his father's words and went
And beat upon the door and called
Nurse Eurycleia:
"Rise you now,
And come you hither, aged woman,
You in whose charge are all the maids
Within our house. My father calls you
To tell you his commands."
So spoke he.
His words unwing'd remained with her,
Fixed in her heart. And now she opened
The doors into the stately hall
And entered, and Telemachus
Went on before her. And she found
Odysseus there and round about him

The bodies of the slain. All stained
He was with blood and clotted gore,
Even as a lion that has slain
An ox upon some farm, and feasted
And goes his way; and on his breast
And on his cheeks on either side
Are stains of blood, and terrible
He is to look on. Stained like him
Odysseus was, with stains of blood
On hands and feet.
And Eurycleia,
When she beheld those bodies there,
And that dread flow of blood, was ready
To cry aloud for joy, beholding
How great a deed was done. But he
Stayed her and bade her to refrain
Her eager longing, speaking thus
In wing'd words:
"Let your heart rejoice,
Old woman, but refrain, nor cry
Aloud in triumph. It is evil
To glory o'er the slain. Their fate
Has brought them to this end, the fate
The gods have shaped them, and their own
Foul deeds of sin. These men respected
No man on earth, or good or evil,
Who came among them. So they now,
Through their own evil deeds, are fallen
A prey to dreadful death.
But tell me,
What of the women of the house?
Which of them do me shame, and which
Are free from fault?"
Then thus replied
His dear nurse Eurycleia:

"My son,
This I will tell you truly. Here
Within your house are fifty women,
Servants whom we have taught to labor
Each at her task, to comb the wool
And bear the servant's lot. And twelve
Out of all these have gone astray
In ways of shame, nor give obedience
To me nor even to their mistress,
Penelope herself. But let me,
I pray, but mount the stairs and enter
Her shining room and tell your wife
What has befallen here; some god
Has poured forth sleep upon her."
Thus
Replied then wise Odysseus:
"Nay,
Awaken her not yet, but send
Hither those women, all who shared
In deeds of evil."
So he spoke,
And forth then went the aged woman
Up through the hall to summon thither
Those maids and bid them speed.

And now
He called to him Telemachus
And called the swineherd and the herdsman,
And in wing'd words he said:
"Begin, now
The work of bearing out the dead,
And bid the women do their part. . . .
Then you shall lead them forth and smite them
With your long swords till they forget

The love that they and these slain wooers
Shared once in secret."

So he spoke,
And all the women in a throng
Entered with loud lamenting, shedding
Full many a flowing tear. And first
They bore the bodies of the slain
And laid them close beneath the porch
Of the walled court, each body laid
Close by its neighbor. And Odysseus
Guided the work himself, and urged
The women on; and they bore forth
The bodies, since they must. And next
They washed clean the fair chairs and tables
With water and with porous sponges.
And, with the swineherd and the herdsman,
Telemachus scraped clean the floor
Of that well-builded hall. The maidens
Bore all away and cast it forth
Out of the door.

And when they thus
Had set the house in order, then
From that fair hall they led those women,
And brought them to a place that lay
Between the roundhouse and the wall
That girt the court. And here they shut them
All in a narrow space, whence none
Might find escape. And thus then spoke
Prudent Telemachus:

"Now never
By any clean and noble death
Would I take life from these, who brought
Shame on my mother's head and sinned
Here with the wooers."

So he spoke,
And tied therewith, fast to a pillar,
The cable of a dark-prowed ship,
And bore its farther end far off
About the roundhouse, and so drew it
High from the earth, that not a one
Might touch her feet to ground And so,
Even as doves or long-winged thrushes
That dash themselves into a net
Hid in a thicket, thinking only
To perch and rest there, but instead
Find that a cruel bed has clasped them—
Even so these women hung, all holding
Their heads in one long row, a noose
Made fast about each neck, to die
The basest of all deaths. A while
They twitched their feet, a little while,
Then all were still.
And now they led
Melanthius forth through porch and courtyard,
And with the cruel sword they cut
His ears and nose away and tore
Each organ from him for the dogs
To eat, and hewed away in anger
His hands and feet.
And now they washed
Their hands and feet, and so returned
Back to Odysseus in the house.
So that work ended.

Now Odysseus
Spoke to his good nurse Eurycleia:
"Bring hither brimstone now, old woman,
To keep off harm; bring fire besides
To purify the hall, then go

And bid Penelope come hither
With all her maids: bid all the women
Within the house to come."
Then answered
His dear nurse Eurycleia:
"Son,
All this you bid me do is fitting
And suited to the time, but, pray,
First let me bring you hither clothing,
A cloak and tunic. Do not stand
Here in the hall with rags like these
On your broad shoulders. Men might blame
The man who did thus."
And Odysseus
Answered and said:
"See first that fire
Is kindled in the hall."
So said he,
And Eurycleia, his dear nurse,
Failed not to heed his words. She brought him
Brimstone and fire besides; with these
Odysseus purified the hall,
The buildings and the court.
And now
Up through the fair house the old woman
Went hastening to tell the women
And speed them on. And forth they came
Out of their room, and in their hands
They all bore torches, and they thronged
About Odysseus and with joy
Welcomed him home and kissed his face
And neck and clasped his hands. And he,
Beholding them, was seized with longing
To sob and weep, for well his heart
Told him their love was true.

BOOK TWENTY-THREE

NOW THE OLD WOMAN WENT HER WAY,
LAUGHING FOR JOY, UP TO THE ROOM
WHERE LAY HER MISTRESS, WITH THE TIDINGS

That her dear lord was come. Her knees
Grew strong with joy; her feeble feet
Ran faster than their wont. She halted
There by her lady's head and thus
She spoke to her:

"Awake, dear child,
Penelope, and see at last
With your own eyes what you have hoped for,
Day after day. For now Odysseus
Is come again, to his own home;
Long looked for, he has come at last,
And he has slain the haughty wooers
Who troubled all his house and wasted
His wealth away and threatened evil
To his dear son."

Then thus replied
The wise Penelope:

"Dear nurse,
The gods have made you mad; for they
Can turn to folly even him
Who is the wisest, and can set
The fool upon the way to wisdom.
And they have turned your wits astray.
Your mind, till now, was ever steady.
Why do you mock me, now my spirit

Is heavy with its grief, to tell me
Such tales as this, awaking me
From the sweet sleep that held me fast
And sealed my eyes? I never yet
Have slept so sweetly since the day
Odysseus went away to see
That evil Ilium none should name.
But go you now; get you again
Down to the hall. If any other
Of those that serve me here had come
And told me such a tale and waked me
Out of my sleep, I should have sent her
Back to the hall in haste, and harshly
I would have dealt with her. Your age,
This time, has saved you."

Then replied
Her dear nurse Eurycleia:

"Nay,
Dear child, I do not mock you. Here
In very truth, Odysseus now
Is with us, he himself. For he
Was the poor stranger every man
Insulted in the hall. Long since
Telemachus knew well that he
Was here among us, but with foresight
He hid his knowledge, that his father
Might all the better take his vengeance
For all the cruel wrongs these men
Have wrought in arrogance."

So said she.
Gladly her mistress heard and sprang
Up from her bed and cast her arms
Round the old woman, and the tears
Flowed from her eyes, and in wing'd words
She said:

"Now, prithee, tell me truly,
My own dear nurse. If he indeed
Is come again, as you are saying,
To his own home, how could he then
So quickly lay his hands in vengeance
Upon the shameless wooers—he
Being but one, while they are many,
Thronging the house!"

And thus replied
Her dear nurse Eurycleia:

"Nay,
I saw not, and I heard no tidings,
Nay, not a sound, save for the groans
Of those he slew. For we in fear
Sat shrinking in the farthest corner
Of our own sheltered room, fast barring
Its close-set doors, until at last
I heard your son Telemachus
Call from the hall, for so his father
Had bid him call. I found Odysseus
Amidst the bodies of the slain,
For all about him they were lying
Upon the trodden floor, aye, many,
Each close upon the other. Glad
Your heart too would have been, had you
But seen him then! Now all the bodies
Are gathered in a heap together
Hard by the courtyard gate, while kindling
A mighty fire he now is cleansing
The noble hall with brimstone. Hither
I come to call you, for he bade me.
Follow me now that you may both
Enjoy your happiness together
With loving hearts, for you have both
Borne many a sorrow. So, to-day,
At last, the thing you long desired

You see accomplished. He has come
Living to his own hearth, and here
Has found his son and you. And now
In his own home he has at last
Had vengeance on these wooers, on all
That wrought him evil!"

Then replied
Prudent Penelope:

"Dear nurse,
Now be not over-quick to boast
And laugh with joy. You know indeed
How welcome he would be to all
In his own house, and most to me
And to the son I bore him. Yet
This tale you tell cannot be true:
Alas, it is some god came hither
And slew those haughty wooers, angered
At the rash insults of their pride
And all their evil deeds. They honored
No man upon the earth, no man
Or good or evil who dared come
Among them here. So for their crimes
They met this end. But far away
Odysseus now has lost for ever
All hope of his returning hither—
Nay, he himself is lost!"

Then answered
Her dear nurse Eurycleia:

"Child,
What words are these that now have passed
The portal of your teeth! To say
That your own husband, he who now
Stands here upon his hearth, will never
Come home again! Your heart is ever
Slow to believe. Yet I can tell you
Another sign, a sign yet surer.

The scar of the deep wound the boar
Once gave with his bright tusk. I spied it
That day I washed his feet, and longed
To tell you what I saw. But he
Laid hand upon my mouth and so
With his wise foresight, stopped my speech.
But come, now, follow me. I venture
My life on this! If I deceive you,
Slay me, and by the worst of deaths!"
Then wise Penelope replied:
"Dear nurse, wise as you are, 'tis hard
To guard against the secret purpose
Of the eternal gods. And yet
Let us go down and seek my son
And see these wooers who lie slain
And him that slew them."

So she spoke,
And down she passed then from her room,
And sorely was her heart divided
Whether to stand far off and question
Her own dear lord, or stand beside him
And kiss his face and clasp his hand.
But when she entered and passed over
The threshold of carved stone, she went
And sat her down, facing Odysseus,
In firelight, by the farther wall.
And he still sat with downcast eyes
By the tall pillar and awaited
In wonder if his stately wife
Would speak to him when she should turn
Her eyes and see him. A long time
She sat in silence, and amazement
Was in her heart; then for a time
She gazed upon him face to face,

And then again she knew him not,
For he still wore upon his body
A beggar's raiment.
And her son,
Telemachus, now spoke, and said,
Reproaching her:
"Mother of mine,
Unmotherly, why is your heart
So hard? Why do you ever keep
Far from my father? Why not sit
Close by his side, and question him,
And ask him all his story? Nay,
There is no other woman living
Would stand aside thus, hardening
A stubborn heart against her husband
Who after many a peril past,
Comes, in the twentieth year, once more
To his own land. Your heart is ever
Harder than stone!"
Then thus replied
Prudent Penelope:
"My son,
My spirit is amazed within me.
I have no power to speak or question
Or look upon his face. And yet,
If this can be Odysseus' self,
And he has now come home, we two
May know each other far more surely
Than any other may, for we
Have secret tokens known to us,
Hidden from all besides."
So said she,
And great Odysseus smiled and quickly
Thus to Telemachus he spoke
In wing'd words:

"Go, Telemachus,
And leave your mother in the hall
To test me. She shall learn ere long
More surely what I am. But now,
Because I am unclean to see,
And wear base garments on my body,
She holds me in dishonor, saying
That I am not her lord!
Yet now
Let us take counsel how all this
May come to the right end. For he
Who slays but one man of a land,
Aye, though it be a man who leaves
Few to avenge him—yet the slayer
Must leave his kin and native land.
But we have slain the very pillar
That props the city, even the best
Of all the noble youth that dwell
In Ithaca. So give, I pray,
Your counsel in this need."
Then thus
The wise Telemachus replied:
"Dear Father, see to this yourself,
For you of all mankind, they say,
Are best in shrewd devices—nay,
No mortal man can be your equal!"
And thus Odysseus, shrewd in counsel,
Replied to him:
"Then I will tell you
The way I find the best. First bathe
And put on tunics. Bid the maidens
Go to their rooms and deck them gaily,
And the good minstrel with clear lyre
Shall lead the joyful dance. Whoever
Shall hear us as he passes by,

Stranger or neighbor—he shall say
We hold a wedding feast. The tidings
That we have slain the wooers here
Shall never reach the town, nay, not
Till we ourselves are far away
Safe on our wooded farm. We there
May make our plans what next to do
Using what wisdom he who dwells
Upon Olympus grants us."
So
Odysseus spoke, and they with heed
Heard and obeyed him. For they bathed them
And put on tunics, and the women
Attired them for the feast; the minstrel
Took up his hollow lyre and wakened
Longing for song, and stirred desire
For the glad dance. And the great hall
Reëchoed with the feet of men
Who danced there and of women girt
With lovely girdles. And whoever
Heard them, without the house, would say:
"Surely at last some man has wedded
That lady whom so many wooed—
A worthless woman, with no courage
To keep her wedded lord's great house
Firmly, till he should come."
Even so
Men spoke, nor knew at all what things
Had there befallen.

But within,
Eurynome the matron bathed
High-souled Odysseus, and anointed
His skin with shining olive oil,
And clad him in fair cloak and tunic.

And now upon his head Athene
Poured forth abundant beauty. Taller
She made him seem, and mightier
To look on, and about his head
She made his locks curl like the clusters
That cling about the hyacinth.
As when a man winds gold and silver—
A skilful craftsman, whom Hephæstus
And wise Athene have trained well
In every art—and as he shapes
His work to beauty, even so
Upon Odysseus' neck and shoulders
She poured forth beauty. So he came
Forth from the bath, and seemed in presence
Like the immortal gods. And thus
He came once more back to the seat
Whence he had risen, and there sat
Facing his wife, and spoke to her
And said:

"O most perplexing woman,
Surely the dwellers on Olympus
Have given you a harder heart
Than other tender women. Nay,
There is no other woman living
Would stand aside thus, hardening
A stubborn heart against her husband
Who after many a peril past
Comes, in the twentieth year, once more
To his own land. So haste now, nurse,
And make my bed, that I may lie
And sleep alone. Her heart within her
Is hard as iron."

And thus answered
The wise Penelope:

"O man
Perplexing to my soul—nay, I
Am not held off by pride, nor scorn you,
But I am lost in wonder. Well
I know what you were once when, sailing
Away in your oared ship, you left
Your home in Ithaca. But come
Now, Eurycleia, and make ready
His firm-built bed. Make it outside
The room he built him himself. Aye, move
His firm-built bedstead forth and strew
Upon it bedding—fleeces, covers,
And bright-hued rugs."

All this she said
To try her husband. But Odysseus
Was angered at her words, and thus
He spoke to his true wife:

"What, woman!
What words are these you now have said
To pierce my heart! Who can have set
My bed in a new place? That task
Would be a hard one, aye, too hard
Even for the cleverest, unless
A god should come and easily
Remove it at his will and set it
In a new place. No mortal man
Of living men, in his full strength,
Could ever move it easily
Out of its present place. For in it,
Wrought in its very frame, is hidden
A secret token, and no other
Wrought this, but I alone.

There grew
Within our yard an olive tree,
Long-leaved and thriving, strong of growth,

Thick as a pillar. Round its trunk
I shaped my room and built it thus
Till all was finished, walling it
With massive stone, and well I fashioned
The roof to cover it and hung
And fitted its joined doors. And then,
From that long-leaved tall olive tree
I cut the crown away and squared,
Using my axe, the stem remaining
Above the roots; then with the adze
I smoothed it and made true the line,
And thus I made my bed-post. Next
I bored it all with a keen auger
And, so beginning, ever worked
On to the end, and it stood finished.
I decked it all with gold and silver
And ivory, and across it stretched
Long strips of oxhide bright and red.
This is the token that I mean.
Now, wife, I do not know if still
That bed is standing there, or whether
Some one has cut that olive stem
And moved it elsewhere."

So he spoke,
And at his words her knees grew weak
And all her soul within, for well
She knew this token that Odysseus
Had told so plainly. And she wept,
And straight to him she ran, and cast
Her arms about her husband's neck
And kissed his face and said:

"Odysseus,
Pray be not angry with me. You
Have ever been, through every fortune,
Wisest of men. The gods have sent

Sore grief upon us, for they grudged us
That we should side by side together
Share the delight of youth and cross
The threshold of old age. Yet be not,
I pray you, wroth with me or blame me,
Because I did not when I saw you,
Run thus to greet you! For my heart
Within my breast was shuddering ever
Lest some strange man should come and cheat me
With lying words. For many a man
Will plot base deeds for gain. But now,
Since you have made so plain the secret
Of this our bed, which no man living
But us has seen—save my one maid,
The serving maid my father gave me
When first I came here, who should watch
The doorway of our room—lo, now
You quite convince this heart of mine,
Stubborn what though it be!"

So spoke she,
And stronger still there came upon him
A yearning need of tears, and there,
Holding his wise and faithful wife,
He wept with joy. And she beside him,
Like men that see the land with gladness—
Seamen whose sturdy ship Poseidon
Has smitten on the deep and shattered
With storm and mighty seas, and few
Are they who from the foaming waters
Escape to swim to shore: their skin
Is crusted with the brine, but happy
They step to land once more, delivered
Out of their danger—with such gladness
She gazed upon her husband. Never
Could she release from round his neck

The clasp of her white arms. So dawn
With rosy fingers would have risen
And found them weeping, but Athene
Had shaped another plan. She stayed
The passing night and made it tarry
At its far bounds, and she delayed
Dawn too, that waited throned in gold
By Ocean's stream, nor let her yoke
Her swift-foot steeds that bring to man
The light of day.

And to his wife
Then wise Odysseus spoke:

"Alas,
Dear wife, we have not reached, not yet,
The end of our sore trials. Nay,
One task there waits me still, a task
Most great and difficult, yet I
Must see it to the end, for so
Teiresias prophesied, the day
I went down to Death's house. He bade me
Pass hence through many a town of men,
Bearing an oar, until I come
To men who know not of the sea
Or ships or shapen oars. And here
He bade me fix my oar and offer
A sacrifice to great Poseidon
And then turn home. And death at last
Shall come upon me from the sea,
The gentlest of all deaths, and bring
My end upon me as I go
Bowed down with placid age, while round me
A happy people dwell. All this
He said should come to pass."

Then answered
The wise Penelope:

"If the gods
Will make our old age happy, truly
We may indeed have hope at last
To find release from evil."

So
They spoke together there. And now
Eurynome the matron came
With torch in hand and showed the way
To their own bed. Meanwhile, within,
Telemachus and the góod herdsman
And swineherd stayed their feet from dancing
And bade the women cease. So there
They laid them down to sleep, and slumbered
Within the shadowy hall.

But now
Odysseus and Penelope
Found new delight in telling over,
Each to the other, all the tale
Of what had passed. For first she told,
That royal lady, all the trials
That she had borne at home, beholding
The shameless throng of wooers, slaying,
All for her sake, they said, such hosts
Of cattle and fine sheep and drawing
And drinking wine unstinted. Next
Noble Odysseus told what woes
He wrought on other men, and all
The bitter sorrows he had suffered.
He told of all—and she with gladness
Hearkened his tale, nor did sleep fall
Upon her till his tale was ended.

He told of the Ciconians first,
And how he conquered them, and how

He came then to that fruitful land
Where Lotus-eaters dwell. He told
What deeds the Cyclops wrought, and how
He made him pay the penalty
For his brave comrades whom that monster
Unpitying devoured. And next,
How to King Æolus he came,
Who welcomed him with love and sent him
Upon his way. And yet his fate
Forbade as yet that he should come
To his dear land, for now again
A snatching tempest bore him far
Across the deep with loud lamenting.
And how he came to Telepylus
In Læstrygonia, where men
Destroyed his ships and mailed companions;
And then he told of Circe too
And all her treacherous wiles, and how
He sought with his oared ship the land
Of Death itself, and questioned there
Theban Teiresias, and saw
Once more his friends long slain, and met
The mother who had given him birth
And watched his childhood. And he told
How he had heard the Sirens sing
Their sweet-voiced song, and how he reached
The Clashing Rocks and how he passed
By dread Charybdis and by Scylla,
Whom none escapes unscathed. He told
The tale of how his comrades slew
The cattle of the Sun, and Zeus,
Who thunders from on high, then smote
His swift ship with a shining bolt
And all his brave companions there
Perished together; only he

Escaped their evil fate and came
Safe to Ogygia, where Calypso,
The nymph, was dwelling, who would hold him
There in her hollow cave forever,
To be her husband, and would make him
Immortal, ever young—yet never
Could she prevail and overcome
The heart within him. And he told
How next he came, through many a toil,
To the Phæacians, how they gave him
Honor as to a god, and sent him
To his own land again, with gifts—
Bronze, gold, and raiment. And this tale
He told the last of all. And now
Sweet sleep came over him and brought
Ease to his wearied limbs, and loosed
His heart from sorrow.

But the goddess,
Keen-eyed Athene, turned her now
To a new plan. For when she deemed
Odysseus had his fill of slumber,
Straightway she roused from Ocean's stream
The early dawn, enthroned in gold,
Who brings the light to men. Then waked
Odysseus: from his soft couch rising,
Thus spoke he to his wife:
"Dear wife,
Surely we both have borne our share
Of trials—you bewailing here
The perils of my homeward way—
While for my part, Zeus held me ever—
Zeus and the other gods—fast bound
In sorrow, far from my own land.
But now that we are joined, watch well

Over what wealth is left me yet
Within these halls. As for the sheep
The haughty wooers slew, why, I
Myself shall seize as many; aye,
And the Achæans shall give more
Till all my folds are full.
But now
Forth to my wooded farm I go
To see my noble father: sorely
He sorrows for my sake. This charge
I lay upon you, for I trust
All to your wisdom: there will spread,
With rising of the sun, the tale
Of all these wooers I have slain
Here in my hall. Then go you up
With all your maidens to your chamber,
And sit you there, nor look about
Nor question any."
So he spoke
And girded then upon his shoulder
His goodly armor, and awaked
Telemachus and the good swineherd
And herdsman too, and bade them take
Their warlike arms in hand. And they
Obeyed his word and armed them straightway
With brazen arms. And now they opened
The doors and forth they passed. Odysseus
Went first and led them. Light already
Lay over all the land, and yet
Athene wrapped them all in darkness
And led them swiftly from the town.

BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

AND NOW CYLLENIAN HERMES CAME
AND SUMMONED FORTH TO DEATH THE SOULS
OF THE SLAIN WOOERS. IN HIS HAND
He held the fair gold wand wherewith
He seals the eyes of whom he will,
Or wakens whom he will from slumber.
With this he roused them to their journey
And led the way, and they came after
With twittering cries. Even as bats
Far in the depths of a dark cave
Flit with shrill twittering when one
Falls from the cluster where they hang
Together to the rock, so these
Thronged forward twittering; and Hermes,
Mild guardian of the dead, led on
Down the moist, shadowy way. They passed
The stream of Ocean and the Rock
By the white waters, and the gates
Of sunset and the land of dreams.
And soon they came to that fair field
Of asphodel where spirits dwell—
The empty images of men
Whose toil is ended.
Here they found
The souls of Peleus' son, Achilles,
Patroclus, great Antilochus,
And Ajax, who in might of body
And beauty was surpassed by none
But great Achilles. Round Achilles

They gathered, and there stood with them
Great Agamemnon:
And now came
The light-swift god, guide of the dead,
Leading the spirits of the wooers
Slain by Odysseus. And the twain
Drew near, amazed, to look upon them.
And Agamemnon's spirit knew
Melaneus' son, that far-famed lord
Amphimedon, for he had been
His host in Ithaca; and thus
First spoke Atrides' spirit:
"Tell me,
Amphimedon, what fate befell
You and these others, that you come
To this dark land, each one of you
A chosen warrior, and all
Equal in years? You are such men
As he would take who chose him out
The best from a whole town. Now was it
In your good ship Poseidon smote you,
Raising foul winds and mighty seas,
Or was it savage men who slew you
On land, as you drove off their cattle
Or goodly flocks of sheep?"
Then thus
Spoke up and answered him the spirit
Of great Amphimedon:
"Full well,
O mighty king, I still remember
All this you speak of, and I now
Will answer and will tell you truly
How it befell that on us all
Came death and doom.

For we had come
To woo the wife of great Odysseus,
Now long away. Yet, though she held
Our wooing hateful, she would never
Refuse us wholly, nor yet end it
By choosing a new lord, but plotted
How she might bring us death. . . . At last
Some evil god, but whence I know not,
Brought home Odysseus. First he came
To an outlying farm, where dwelt
His faithful swineherd, and the swineherd
Brought to us, in the hall, Odysseus,
Clad like an aged beggar, feeble,
Leaning upon a staff, and wretched
The raiment that he wore! And no one—
No, not the eldest there—might know
That this was he, so suddenly
He stood among us. So we made
A jest of him with words, and cast
Our missiles at him. But he ever
With steadfast heart, in his own house,
Endured our blows and taunts. And then
When at the last the will of Zeus
Aroused him, with his son he bore
The glorious weapons from the hall
And drew the bolts. And now he bade,
With craft and cunning, that his wife
Set forth his bow before the wooers,
To be the means of contest, aye,
And bring us death! And not a man
Among us had the strength to string
That mighty bow; our might of arm
Was all too weak. But when at last
That mighty bow came to the hands
Of great Odysseus, lightly then

He took the bow in hand, and sent
The arrow through the axes. Then
He went and stood upon the threshold
And poured forth all the shafts before him,
And terribly he glanced about
On all within. First he struck down
Lordly Antinoüs. And now,
Aiming at all the rest, he shot
His deadly arrows; and they fell
Before him, side by side. Soon saw we
Some god was there to help him. Swiftly
They swept in furious might and slew us
On every side, and horrible
Arose the groans of those who fell
With shattered heads, and all the floor
Ran red with blood.

And so we perished,
O Agamemnon, one and all.
And still our bodies all uncared for
Lie in Odysseus' house. Our friends
Sit in their homes and have no tidings,
Else they had come ere this, to wash
The dark blood from our wounds and lay us
Fitly for funeral, with wailing—
A duty owed the dead."

Then answered
Atrides' spirit:

"You indeed
Are happy, O Laërtes' son,
Ready Odysseus! For you won
A wife of rarest worth, so noble
In wisdom was Penelope,
Child of Icarius. So well
She ever kept in mind Odysseus,
Her wedded lord. And so the fame

Of her high worth shall never perish,
But the immortal gods shall fashion
Sweet song, to honor before all men
Steadfast Penelope." . . .
So spoke they
One with another, standing there
In Death's house, in the secret places
Of under-earth.

Now when Odysseus
And his companions left the town,
They reached ere long Laërtes' farm,
Fair and well-tended. He had gained it
Long since by his hard toil and here
He made his home. And all about it
There ran a shelter where the servants
That did his bidding, ate and drank
And slept by night. And here there dwelt
An aged woman, a Sicilian,
Who ever watched o'er the old man
With faithful care, afar from town,
Upon his lonely farm. And hither
Now came Odysseus, and he spoke
Unto his servants:
"Enter straightway
The well-built house and slay for dinner
The best of all the swine. But I
Would fain make trial if my father
Still knows my face, or if he now
Knows me no more, since I have been
So long away."
He spoke and gave
His warlike weapons to the servants.
Quickly they hastened to the house,
But on he went and sought the vineyard

To make his trial. There he found
His father, digging at the earth
About a plant, toiling alone
In his well-ordered vineyard—wearing
A soiled old tunic, patched and shabby.
And he had bound about his legs
Stitched leather leggings, to keep off
The scratch of thorns, and on his hands
Were gloves to guard him from the briars,
And on his head a goatskin cap.
And ever as he labored there
His grief grew greater.
And Odysseus,
Steadfast and godlike, gazed upon him
Thus worn with age and weighed with grief
That pressed his heart; so halting there
By a tall pear-tree he stood weeping
To see him thus. And long he pondered
Whether to go to him and kiss him
And clasp him in his arms and tell him
The whole long tale of how he came
Once more to his own native land—
Or whether first to question him
And try his knowledge. This at last
His heart found best, to try his father,
Perplexing him with words. So now,
With this in mind, the great Odysseus
Went straight to where he toiled. Laërtes,
His head held low, was even now
Spading about the plant. Beside him
Halted his noble son and said:
"You have, old man, no lack of skill
In caring for a garden. Ably
You tend it all, for here is nothing—

No plant or fig-tree, vine or olive,
No pear-tree, aye, or garden bed—
That lies uncared for. But one thing
I have to tell you: let it not
Anger your heart—that you yourself
Lack proper tending. Here you suffer
The miseries of age, and go
Untidy, and ill-clad besides
In clothes that shame you. I am sure
It is not for your idle ways
Your master thus neglects you. Nothing
About you shows the slave, nay, nothing
In face or figure, for you seem
Like one of kingly rank, a man
Who after he has bathed and eaten
Sleeps a soft sleep, as aged men
Are ever wont to do. But tell me,
And tell me truly: Who is he
You serve as thrall here? Whose this garden
You now are tending? Tell me too,
For I must know the truth of this,
If this indeed be Ithaca
That I am come to. For so told me
A man I met upon the way
As I came hither. But he lacked
A lively mind, and had no will
Either to tell what I would learn
Or listen when I asked, not even
When I asked tidings of a friend—
Whether he lived yet in this land
Or whether he was dead and dwelt
Now in the land of Death. So now
I come to you for answer. Pray
Attend and hear me: I had once

In my own land a guest, and never
Was any stranger from afar
More welcome in our home. He told me
That he was born in Ithaca,
And that his father was Laërtes,
Arcesius' son. And I received him
And welcomed him, and gave him, too,
Full many a noble gift." . . .
Then answered
His father, through his tears:
"Indeed,
Stranger, you now have reached that land
You ask me of. But they who rule here
Are insolent and wicked. . . .
Come,
Now tell me this and plainly: When—
How many years ago, was this,
When you received there as your guest
This luckless stranger—my own son,
Ill-fated truly, if indeed
That man was he! The fish, ere now,
Far from his native land, have eaten
His body in the deep; or cast
Upon the land it lies unburied
A prey to birds and beasts. Nor any,
Neither his father nor his mother,
Those whom he owed his birth, might weep him
And wrap him for his burial. Nay,
Not even his wife, so richly dowered,
Steadfast Penelope, might sorrow
Over his bier, the duty due
From a man's faithful wife, or close
His eyes in death—for these are honors
We owe the dead. But tell me truly,

That I may rightly know: Who are you,
And of what people? What your city?
And where dwelt they that gave you birth?
Where does the swift ship lie that brought you
With all your noble comrades? Was it
Upon another's ship you took
Your passage hither? Did the sailors
Embark and sail away?"

Then thus
Crafty Odysseus answered:

"Truly
I now will tell you all. I come
Hither from Alybas, and there
Dwelt in a stately home. My father
Was Polypemon's son, Apheidas;
And I am named Eperitus.
Hither some god, against my will,
Drove me from far Sicania;
My ship lies yonder by the farms
Outside the town. As for Odysseus—
This is the fifth year since he went
Forth from my home, and left my land,
Ill-fated man! Yet as he sailed,
The birds gave lucky omens, flying
On his right hand. So I was glad,
And sent him on his way, and he
Set forth in happiness. And still
Our hearts had hope we yet might meet
Once more in friendship and once more
Give noble gifts."

So spoke Odysseus,
And sorrow, like a sudden cloud,
Closed black about Laërtes. Stooping,
He plucked up ashes with both hands

And cast them over his grey head
And groaned aloud in grief.
And now
Odysseus' heart was moved: keen pain
Clutched at his nostrils when he saw
His father's suffering. He hastened
And clasped him in his arms, and kissed him,
And said:
"Nay, father, I myself
Am he you ask of—come once more,
Now, after twenty years, to this,
My own dear land! But cease your weeping
And sobs and tears. For I have news
To tell you. Great now is the need
To act with haste. For I have slain
The wooers in our hall and punished
Their grievous insolence and all
Their deeds of evil."
Then replied
Laërtes, saying:
"If indeed
You are Odysseus, my own son
Come home again, tell me some token,
Some clear sign for a proof."
Then answered
Noble Odysseus:
"First, I pray,
Look at this scar, the wound a boar
Gave me with his white tusk, long since
Upon Parnassus when I made
My journey thither. For you sent me,
You and my mother, there to seek
Autolycus, my mother's brother,
And get the gifts he promised me

With solemn promise, when our guest.
And I will number off, besides,
Those trees which in our orchard rows
You gave me when, a child, I followed
Your steps about the farm and asked you
To give me all I saw. We walked
Among the trees, and you named each
And told me of each one, and gave me
Trees for my own—ten apple-trees,
And thirteen pear-trees, fifty fig-trees,
And then you told off fifty rows
Of vines to give me, and each row
Was bearing in its time, each laden
On every side with clustered grapes
Of every kind, whene'er the season
Sent from above by Zeus would weigh them
With fruitful burden."

So he spoke,
And now his father's knees grew weak
And all his heart within. For well
He knew these tokens that Odysseus
Had told so plainly. And he cast
His arms about his own dear son,
And steadfast great Odysseus seized him
Fainting with joy and drew him close.
And now, when he drew breath again
And life returned anew—once more
Laërtes answered:

"Mighty Zeus,
Father of all, surely the gods
Upon Olympus still have power
If it be true these wooers paid
The price of their proud sin. And yet
My heart is sore afraid: I fear
Lest all the men of Ithaca

March here against us; they will send
Their summons through our cities."
Then
Thus answered wise Odysseus:
"Courage!
Let not this thought disturb your heart.
But come now to the house that stands
Beside the orchard. For I thither
Have sent Telemachus and with him
The swineherd and the herdsman. They
Will make our dinner ready."
So
Odysseus spoke. And on they went
To that fair house, and there they found
Telemachus and the good swineherd
And herdsman carving meat and mingling
The glowing wine. . . .
And now Laërtes
Thus spoke:
"O father Zeus, and you,
Athene and Apollo—would,
Alas, I were what I was once,
The day when I took Neriton,
That strong-walled city on the heights,
Leading my men to battle! Aye,
Would I might yesterday have stood
Thus in your hall, my armor girt
Upon my shoulders, beating back
The press of warriors. Many a knee
In fear of me had then grown weak
There in your hall; your heart within you
Would have rejoiced." . . .
And when they ended
The task of setting forth the meal,
They took their seats. And now there entered

The aged Dolius and his sons,
Wearied with toil.
The aged woman
From Sicily, the young men's mother,
Had gone to call them. . . . When their eyes
Beheld Odysseus and their minds
Had marked him well, there in the room
They stood in wonder.
But Odysseus
Spoke to them in kind words, and said:
"Now sit you down, old man, and dine.
Forget your wonder. For we long,
Though hungry for our food, have waited
And looked for you."
So spoke Odysseus,
And Dolius quickly ran to greet him
With outstretched arms. He seized his hand
And kissed it on the wrist, and spoke
In wing'd words, saying:
"Now, dear master,
You come once more to us, who longed
Sorely to see you, and who thought
Never to see you more. And now
The gods themselves have brought you! Welcome!
Welcome indeed! And may the gods
Grant you all happiness!" . . .
And now
The sons of Dolius gathered round
Renowned Odysseus: with kind words
They welcomed him and clasped his hands,
And then by Dolius their father
They sat, each in his place. So there
They all made busy with the meal
In the great room.

But Rumor now,
Bearing her tidings, had sped forth
Swiftly through all the city, telling
The dreadful death and fate that fell
Upon the wooers. And now came
All those that heard the tale, and gathered
From every hand with moan and wailing
Before Odysseus' house. And each
Bore forth his dead out of the house,
And buried them. And all the bodies
Of those that came from other cities,
They gave to fishermen to bear
Homeward in their swift ships.

And now
They thronged to the assembling-place
With sorrowing hearts; and when they all
Were gathered there and met together,
Then rose Eupithes and he thus
Spoke forth among them, for his heart
Still held a sorrow naught could soothe
For sake of great Antinoüs,
His own dear son, whom first of all
Mighty Odysseus slew. His tears
Fell for his son as thus he spoke:
"Alas, friends, what a deed was this
This man has wrought, a monstrous deed
Against us of Achæa. First
He bore off in his ships brave men
And many too; and lost at sea
His hollow ships, and lost with them
Those men of ours. And now he comes
And slays the best of all our land.
At once, ere his swift flight can reach
Pylus or holy Elis, rise,
Set forth and follow, or endure

Disgrace forever. Men will tell
Our shame in days to come, if now
We fail at once to fall in vengeance
On those who slew our sons and brothers.
I cannot think that life itself
Could then be sweet. Nay, better far
To die this instant, and so join
Those that lie slain! But come, haste forth
Ere they escape us and depart
Across the water." . . . So he spoke,
Tears in his eyes, and pity seized
All the Achæans. . . .
And now rose
And spoke the old man Halitherses
Who saw the past and things to be,
And thus, with noble aim, he said:
"Hearken now, men of Ithaca,
To what I say. Through your own sin
These evil deeds came on you. . . . Monstrous
The deeds they did, to waste the wealth
And woo the wife of their own lord,
Their rightful ruler, idly saying
That he would come no more. So heed
What I now say: Go not—or else
Some here will fall into an evil
Of their own seeking."
So he spoke,
But more than half now to their feet
Sprang with a mighty cry—the others
Abiding in their seats—for naught
This counsel pleased their minds: they heeded
None but Eupithes. Swiftly sped they
To seek them weapons, and they bound
The gleaming bronze about their bodies,
And so together they thronged forth

Before that spacious town. Eupithes,
Mad with his folly, led them on.
For now he thought he would take vengeance
For his dear son. Yet nevermore
Should he come home again, but there
Must meet his destined death.

And now
Thus spoke Athene to great Zeus
The son of Cronus:
"Mighty father
High over all, great Cronus' son,
Mightiest of kings, now grant an answer
To what I ask you. In your heart
What purpose keep you hidden? Seek you
To stir these men to evil strife
And clash of deadly war, or settle
Between them lasting peace?"
And Zeus,
Who guides the clouds, thus answered her:
"Why do you ask me this, my daughter,
And trouble me with questions! Nay,
Was it not you, aye, you yourself
Who first thought out this plan—to let
Odysseus come and take his vengeance
Upon the wooers! So, now, do
Even as you will! Yet I will tell you
What way is best: since now Odysseus
Has taken vengeance on the wooers,
Let all men swear, with sacrifice,
An oath of peace, and let Odysseus
Be king henceforth. And for the slaying
Of sons and brothers—let this be
Forgiven and forgotten. All
Even as of old shall love each other,

And peace and plenty shall abound
For all alike."
So spoke he, urging
Athene on to what already
Her heart desired, and swift she sped
Down from Olympus' heights.

Now they
Within the house had stayed their hunger
With good food honey-sweet. Then thus
The long-tried, great Odysseus spoke
And said:
"Let some one now go forth
And see if they come near."
So spoke he,
And as he bade, a son of Dolius
Went forth and stood upon the threshold
And saw them close at hand. And quickly
He called in wing'd words to Odysseus:
"They come now, close upon us! Up!
Arm yourselves quickly!"
So he spoke,
And up they sprang and took their arms,
The four who followed great Odysseus,
And Dolius' six sons. Then, too,
Dolius and Laërtes armed them:
Though white their hair, they still at need
Were ready for the fight. And now,
When each had girt about his body
His glittering armor, they cast open
The doors and forth they came, Odysseus
Foremost of all.
And now Athene
Drew near them, and she seemed like Mentor
In form and voice. And great Odysseus

Beheld her and rejoiced, and straightway
Thus said he to his own dear son,
Telemachus:
"Now hold this fast
In heart, Telemachus; since now
You come where valiant men in battle
Must prove their worth:—look well you bring
No shame now on your father's house,
A line far-famed through all the earth
For strength and daring."
And thus answered
Prudent Telemachus:
"Dear father,
Now, if you will, you shall behold
What spirit fills my heart. For always
I heed your counsel, and shall never
Bring shame upon your race."
So spoke he.
Laërtes at his words rejoiced
And said:
"Ah, what a day is this
Ye grant me, ye kind gods! Now happy
I am indeed. For now my son
And my son's son are rivals here
In deeds of valor!"
Then beside him
There came the keen-eyed maid Athene
And said:
"Son of Arcesius,
Laërtes, whom I hold the dearest
Of my companions, call you now
In prayer upon the keen-eyed maid
And Father Zeus. Then raise your spear
With its long shaft, and draw it back
And hurl it swiftly."

So she spoke,
Pallas Athene, and she filled him
With strength beyond his own. He prayed
First to the daughter of great Zeus,
Then raised his spear with its long shaft,
And drew it back and hurled it swiftly
And smote Eupithes. And the spear
Struck the bronze helmet's cheek; yet this
Stayed not its course: straight through sped on
The brazen point. Down fell the man
With heavy fall: his armor clattered
About him as he fell. And now
Odysseus and his valiant son
Rushed on the foremost ranks and smote them
With swords and double-pointed spears.

And now they would have slain them all
Nor had one man come home, but loudly
Before them all now called the goddess,
Athene, daughter of great Zeus
Who wields the ægis; at her shout
All the host halted.
"Hear me now,
Ye men of Ithaca, and cease
From savage battle. Stay this bloodshed
And quickly part in peace!"
So spoke
Mighty Athene. Pale fear seized them;
Their frightened hands released their weapons
And dropped them to the ground, so dreadful
The goddess' voice. They turned and fled
In terror to the town, and each
Thought only of his life. Behind them
Terrible rang Odysseus' cry
As gathering his strength, he came

Swooping upon them like an eagle.
And now the son of Cronus cast
His smouldering thunderbolt. It fell
Close by the keen-eyed maiden, daughter
Of a dread father. Then thus spoke
Keen-eyed Athene:
"Great Odysseus,
Laërtes' wise and noble son,
Stay, cease this battle where fate lies
In equal balance, lest you anger
Great Cronus' son, far-seeing Zeus."

So spoke Athene, and Odysseus
Obeyed her, glad at heart. And so,
Taking the form and voice of Mentor,
Pallas Athene, mighty daughter
Of ægis-bearing Zeus, made peace
Between them evermore.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

OMITTED PASSAGES

Book One

Athene, after the council upon Olympus, hastens to Ithaca to find Telemachus. She finds him there among the insolent wooers, who are feasting and reveling, slaying beasts and drinking wine, at Odysseus' expense. Appearing in human form, she advises Telemachus to sail in search of information about his father. He agrees and speaks to the wooers, calling an assembly of his people to discuss the situation. This is to meet early the next morning. In this book we get little that is not to be found in later books. It does, however, make us realize early in the story how much Odysseus is needed in his home, and how just a reason he will have for seeking vengeance when he does come. It helps, too, to set vividly before our eyes the home that he is picturing as he struggles homeward—his high-roofed hall, his faithful wife, his son grown to manhood.

Book Two

Telemachus bears up well before the council, but the strain proves too great for so young a man. He breaks down in tears and casts his sceptre to the ground. Still, he tells the assembly openly what he thinks of the wooers. Antinoüs answers him insolently, blaming Penelope and demanding a decision. No attention is

given to Telemachus' request for a ship and men. Yet Athene, disguised as a friend, gets him these, fills his ship with supplies, and sends him off with a fair wind—all without the wooers' knowledge. She goes with him upon his journey.

BOOK THREE

For the story of this book see Book Seventeen, page 210. In Telemachus' report to his mother we have Homer's own summary of Book Three and of part of Book Four.

BOOK FOUR

In the latter part of Book Four we hear what happened in Ithaca while Telemachus was away. The wooers learn by accident that he has sailed away in a ship. They are indignant and make plans to have him slain on his return, sending a ship to lie in wait for him behind a rocky island in the straits. A faithful herald tells this plot to Penelope and she laments hopelessly, seeing no help anywhere. Athene, however, appears to her in disguise and tells her to have no fears for Telemachus. He lives and will return in safety. Athene herself is his protector.

ABRIDGMENTS

In Book Five all the latter part is greatly abridged. We lose Homer's vivid account of the wreck of the raft and the struggles of Odysseus to get a foothold upon the surf-swept rocks.

In Book Eight, at page 53, there is omitted a long song, not connected in any way with the main story of the *Odyssey*, dealing with the life of the gods upon Olympus.

In Book Eleven this translation omits the list of

women famous in classic legend, who gather by the trench in the land of the dead. Much of this list is probably later than the rest of the poem. After this, there is a brief return to the hall of Alcinoüs. The King and Queen beg Odysseus to continue his story, and he does this, giving an account of his meeting with Agamemnon, Achilles and others. Much of this part is given (page 130 and following) but there is considerable omission of mythological descriptions that are in many cases late additions.

In Book Fifteen practically all is omitted, little having direct bearing on the main story except the warning received by Telemachus and his escape from the wooers.

In Book Sixteen much of the conversation between Odysseus and Eumæus is omitted. Odysseus tells a false story of his life and Eumæus tells the true story of his.

In almost all cases, this translation omits the long invented tales told by Odysseus, who spins out lies with a facility and delight that any modern liar must envy! Whatever they show regarding his fertility of invention, they are not essential to the action of the story.

COMMENTS UPON THE STORY

BOOK ONE

Hermes is often called *Argeiphontes.* This means *appearing in brightness* or *flashing swiftly as light.* The word was long taken to mean *slayer of Argus.* Perhaps the story of Argus was made up to explain the word.

BOOK FIVE

Observe how smoothly this book joins Book One. The junction is so smooth that several critics have

thought that everything that comes between may be a later addition.

Calypso is unwilling to let Odysseus go. She cannot see how he can prefer a mere mortal, Penelope, to a goddess like herself. While she resents the interference of Zeus, she dares not defy his will.

In the meeting of Calypso and Hermes, we see gods meeting casually, with their dignity laid by. Yet Homer, in some way, makes us feel that they are finer and more powerful than mortals.

Odysseus' raft was not small. It was only a raft, but strongly built, with a deck and with raised bulwarks, all firmly fastened with wooden bolts or trenails. It would be seaworthy in good weather but would quickly break up in a "whole gale."

BOOK SIX

Here is given a realistic picture of home life three thousand years ago. Nausicaä is not so unlike a modern girl. She preaches a little, as some high school girls might do, and is just a bit too eager to let the unlucky stranger know how powerful and important her father is. She confides in him freely, telling him how vulgar men comment on a nice girl's conduct. But she meets an emergency with courage and judgment and tact, and with almost royal authority. Plainly she is born to be a queen.

Picture the full beauty of the scene—the blue sea beyond, the bright-colored clothing spread on the pebbly beach, the girls at their game, and the sea-beaten, salt-crusted stranger who comes forth awkwardly, branch in hand, from the trees and bushes. And we can see Nausicaä proudly draw herself up, knowing that, whatever serving maids may do, her father's daughter is not afraid.

BOOK SEVEN

The Phæacians are probably an invented people, perhaps an echo of that sea-going people whose name their own resembles. (For their location, see Map II.) They lived on and by the sea. Most of their names are taken from the sea or ships. The sea seems the background of all their life. If Poseidon later did shut their city from the sea by a great mountain, we may suspect that that was the end of Phæacia.

Arete is mistress in her home, and one feels that Alcinoüs consults her about his decisions in his council. Nausicaä appears almost as much her own mistress as many girls of to-day.

The palace seems impossibly rich, yet excavations have shown that the great princes of those days lived in splendid luxury, mixed with the most democratic simplicity. Read about the excavations at Troy, at Mycenæ, and other cities of that time.

BOOK EIGHT

If Homer was indeed a blind minstrel, we have in Demodocus a picture of what he must have been, as he sat at the tables of the great lords of his day. We can see how he learned about kings and their palaces.

With the insulting speech of Euryalus and Odysseus' triumph in hurling the discus, we come to the main theme of the poem. The poor stranger, the outcast Odysseus, has in him the hidden power to triumph over his enemies. Those who despise him will learn their error. In the story of the discus we have a foretaste of what is to come when Odysseus meets the wooers.

For the Trojan horse, see page xxvii. If you can get Vergil's *Æneid* in Latin or in English, read Vergil's

account of the same event, told from the Trojan side. (*Æneid*, Book II., lines 1 to 267.) Compare the two accounts.

In two separate places in this Book, Odysseus weeps to hear the minstrel's song. Perhaps Homer strikes the same note twice for greater effect; perhaps two different versions have been joined into one.

BOOK NINE

We feel a pleasant thrill when Odysseus speaks his name. Is it he who brags, or is it not really Homer and ourselves, the readers, who boast to Alcinoüs that this is our hero! For we know now that he *is* our hero and that our hearts are with him.

It is hard to grasp the attitude of Odysseus to the Ciconians. He seems to have had nothing against them, but he took their city and destroyed it and slew them because they were foreigners, and he wanted what they had. Still, some people even to-day seem to feel that foreigners are in some way outside the law, and that we need not show them the same consideration we show to friends and neighbors. It has been a long way from the attitude we find here to World Congresses and hopes of Universal Peace. In the old days a man's possessions were likely to be the spoils of any stronger man who landed on his shores.

The story of the Lotus-eaters is a triumph of compact narration. No longer than many a high school composition, it is immortal. What is there in this short passage that has made it outlast whole volumes that have perished? These few lines inspired Tennyson to write a long poem, which can hardly outlive Homer's simple story.

A Cyclops is impossible, yet Cyclops satisfies a human expectation of horror, a feeling we try to satisfy with ogres and ghosts and murders. Cyclops has the

raw elements of real savagery. There have been always, in lost corners of the earth, lagging bits of mankind, with more of the gorilla than of the god, creatures of primeval darkness, like the lonely monster in *Beowulf*. They had no ships or fields or houses; no law or courtesy; they kept apart from other men; they ate human flesh and felt equal to the gods. If there never was an actual and literal Cyclops, the spirit of the horrible creature rings true to life. His one monstrous eye is a symbol of his warped nature.

It is characteristic of the simple morals of Homer's day that Odysseus naïvely wonders, on entering the Cyclops' cave, which will pay better: to rob him of what is there, and sail off, or to wait, appeal to him as a guest and suppliant, and get gifts from him. In waiting for the gifts, Odysseus certainly makes a grave error.

Homer, skilled in telling his story, makes plain in advance, before Odysseus has use for the wine, how he comes to have it, and how strong it is.

Cyclops tries to find where Odysseus has left his ship, but Odysseus is too shrewd to let him know. Why does Odysseus hide his real name?

For all the savagery of the happenings in the cave, the scenes have pastoral simplicity and even pathos. We hear not only about putting out the giant's eye, but no less clearly all about the herding and milking of the flocks. And Homer is impartial. We may loathe Polyphemus, yet we feel with him in his affliction as he sends his old friend the ram out to pasture.

The interest is artfully maintained. Homer never delays the action till he is sure he has aroused expectation, is sure his audience will wait—and then he keeps them waiting. Note the suspense at the end. We are not certain all is well till that second rock has missed the ship.

BOOK TEN

A floating island is impossible. Yet mariners have found islands where they did not expect them, and have failed to find them where islands should be! No wonder that some early—and uncertain—navigators insisted that the islands moved about. Incidentally the ancients believed that all the land rested upon the sea. This made it easier for Poseidon to shake the earth.

The palace of Æolus seems more primitive, in some undefinable way, than the other palaces we see in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus has sailed back somehow into an earlier age than his own. We get a glimpse of prehistoric kings.

Vergil brings in Æolus, but his King of the Winds is a different figure. (See the *Æneid*, Book I., lines 50-86.) Observe, by the way, that Vergil copies the storm in Book One from Homer's storms in the *Odyssey*.

It is another instance of Homer's realism that his hero, Odysseus, able commander that he is, cannot always control his men. They insist sometimes upon doing the forbidden.

The Læstrygonians, like the Cyclops, suggest cannibals and savages, people of the ends of the earth. They live where day and night confuse their borders—an idea based on tales of travellers who had seen the long days of the North. The whole Læstrygonian adventure has the quality of a nightmare. These people come upon us suddenly, horrifyingly, with insane ferocity.

Odysseus does well to keep his own ship outside that tiny rock-bound harbor. How much better had he kept all the rest there too! Remember that from this point on, his fleet is sadly diminished. He set sail with twenty ships and several hundred men. Now he has but one ship and less than a hundred followers.

Circe is a convincing creation. We cannot under-

stand her, but we know she would do what Homer says she did. She seems to concentrate in her person all the mystery and romance of her mysterious island, in its circle of blue sea, where she grows like a beautiful—and poisonous—flower.

The first adventure with Circe, that of the men, makes us realize the danger of Odysseus as he draws near the house. We know what lies before him.

Why does Circe change from malicious witchcraft to love? Is it because Odysseus is able to overcome her spells? Why is she more willing to help him upon his way than Calypso ever was?

Odysseus spent seven years upon Calypso's island. Now he spends a whole year with Circe. Is this stay entirely against his will?

Elpenor's death is not altogether owing to drunkenness. The man seems to lack good sense—a brainless blundering sort of fellow.

BOOK ELEVEN

Students especially interested in Greek myths might look up the parts that are omitted.

The ancients called their world of the dead the *Happy Fields,* but they seem far from happy. Death of the sort they picture might be endured; no one could look forward to it with hope. A man's spirit was a bloodless shadow of what he had been in life. Extinction might almost be better!

The meeting of Elpenor brings a strange mystery and sense of reality into the story. We left his body on Circe's island. Yet we find him here.

The Prophecy of Teiresias carries the story out beyond the limits of the poem. See the closing note on page 408.

A most affecting passage is the account of the meeting of Odysseus and his mother. Think how they had parted, and then imagine this meeting, in this place of

shadow and strange presences, both shaken with love and pity.

To those who love the *Iliad* there is a magic in the picture of the great Achilles as he strides off across the fields of asphodel.

The story of the death of Agamemnon was a favorite subject for Greek dramatists.

BOOK TWELVE

Why should Circe tell Odysseus all about the Sirens, Scylla, etc., when we are soon to hear what happened when he met them? Does not the first telling rouse expectation, telling us what to look for? And does not the real thing, when we come to it, exceed our expectation?

One can explain away Scylla and Charybdis and the Sirens, but it is a mistake to do so. Suppose such stories *did* grow up from experiences with a huge octopus, a whirlpool and a lovely island that invited sailors too near to perilous rocks. Such stories soon cut away from their foundations and come to be believed on their own account, gaining a new kind of truth because they typify in a horrible semi-human way the ferocity of wind and rock and breaker, the pitiless forces of nature.

BOOK THIRTEEN

Homer dreamed of speed that his age never realized. To-day our swift steamships carry us over miles of sea in a night of peaceful sleep. Yet no modern ship has the mystery of Odysseus' dark voyage, its sense of cool peace and starlight and swift flight, with oars tearing the salt sea.

Is Odysseus' inability to recognize his own land a little like Penelope's inability to recognize him? (Page 356.) Or is it entirely owing to Athene's magic? Or

does her magic merely stand for and explain the state of his mind?

Athene has a curious attitude toward Odysseus. She stands far above Circe and Calypso. She is of the aristocracy of heaven, one of the great Twelve, who dwell on Olympus. She may not love a mortal. Yet, in kindly understanding, she loves Odysseus better than any except Penelope. She loves him for what he is. With what amusement she appreciates his lie: she was herself a mistress of the art. Penelope might justly have been more jealous of her understanding companionship than she was of the passing fascinations of the island goddesses.

Odysseus is disguised by the power of Athene. Now and then he is allowed briefly to resume his true form. He is not, except for this disguise, an old man; merely a bit past middle age, with a mature manly beauty. As for the changes, Homer knew that people past middle age look older or younger from time to time, according to their health and spirits at the moment.

Eumæus is not a mere thrall. He is a man of intelligence, shrewd, observant, able to direct men. He is so real that, as a critic said of some character, "you can walk around him."

Take in the whole spirit and character of life upon his farm. Suppose you could literally visit Greece of three thousand years ago! How you would use your eyes! Use Homer's now. Surely Homer was not blind when he saw Ithaca.

Do not skip any of the conversation. It helps you to understand the spirit of the men, the condition of the land, and the crisis that Odysseus must face. You realize why he must move cautiously.

BOOK SIXTEEN

Of this whole Book, only one passage is retained. It is beautiful in itself and is important in the action and

spirit of the story as a whole. We see beginning the plans that led to the great slaughter of the wooers.

BOOK SEVENTEEN

Here, if we do not know Books One and Two, we get our first glimpse of Odysseus' home. Homer was wise, however, in the complete poem, in letting us see at the very outset the place to which Odysseus was returning. He wanted us to know what Odysseus had in mind when he thought of his wife and his high-roofed hall, and also, what Odysseus could only guess, the sort of man Telemachus had grown to be. We get here, too, in Telemachus' own words, the story of Books Three and Four.

The plot moves forward steadily. Odysseus comes to his house in disguise. The meeting with Melanthius gives us the first taste of what Odysseus must undergo at the hands of the wooers.

The death of the old dog makes the time of absence real. The dog's life is a measure of the time Odysseus has been away. Now that time is over. He dies as Odysseus returns. And how true and pathetic the picture is.

The blow given by Antinoüs follows upon the kick given by Melanthius. What Melanthius is among the servants, Antinoüs is among the wooers. His blow begins a long accumulation of insults and injuries, but the list is not too long. The child who builds up a tall tower of blocks to knock down, builds it as high as he possibly can. Let these wooers heap up their wrongs to Odysseus. Only so can we be sure, when he stands up to slay these men, that justice wings his arrows.

Penelope's eagerness to see this man arouses our expectation. Once that suspense is created the poet may delay the actual meeting.

No important events occur in this book, but there

is a slow and steady ascent. It is like the sloping plain that leads up to the foot of the mountain. We find a steady rising of the action, steps of preparation, increased sympathy with Odysseus, indignation with his enemies, and expectation of vengeance.

BOOK EIGHTEEN

The fight with Irus is not "nice", but it has reality. Through it we get another glimpse of Odysseus' hidden power. The first came when he hurled the discus in Phæacia. We know that when the hour comes, we can trust his strength.

The beauty of Penelope excites the wooers and hurries on the ending. It shows us too that she is not old. Our story is not a middle-aged romance. Our hero is still young enough to knock out a hulking bully, and our heroine can still bewilder men with her beauty.

See how between the lines there always sounds, more and more ominously, the note of approaching vengeance upon the wooers.

BOOK NINETEEN

The book opens with the first direct step toward the coming tragedy: all the weapons are laid away. The appearance of Athene keeps up the sense of divine help being at hand.

The insolence of Melantho carries on the undercurrent of insult to Odysseus. Homer is stirring us, too, to revenge.

The first meeting of Odysseus and Penelope is a scene the reader naturally expects, a scene that must be written. Yet how strange it is when we see it. Here sit husband and wife, side by side in their own home, after twenty years of separation; yet she has no suspicion of his identity. Why does he not tell her?

Think of her emotional nature, her long suspense. Can he be sure, though her tongue might tell no secrets, that voice and face and manner might not betray her happiness and her excitement? Brutus's Portia, in *Julius Cæsar* would have betrayed his secret to any one who watched her with a keen eye. Odysseus acted wisely in not laying this burden upon his overwrought wife.

Eurycleia's recognition brings an abrupt crisis. How ready Odysseus is to meet the danger! Luckily Eurycleia is old; her face is an expressionless mask; she knows a century of secrets.

The story of the boar takes us out of the line of the story. But Homer is doing far more than accounting for the wound. A modern novelist would have begun his story in Odysseus' boyhood, telling how he was startled to see his father's shining sword and brazen helmet. Homer begins his story in the middle, but gives quick glances backward into youth and boyhood. See the story of the rows of trees, in Book Twenty-four. The story of the boar takes us well into his youth. We see the young Odysseus bound on his first adventure. And we see, as we read it, the old man sitting there by Eurycleia, the same man, with a scar still upon his leg.

Penelope's dream keeps before us the restless stir of the approaching event.

BOOK TWENTY

Anticipation steadily increases. The spirit of the reader "growls" with that of Odysseus at the sins and insolence of the wooers. And we take courage with him at the reassurance of Athene. "I am a god and your friend and protector."

We feel how he suffers to hear Penelope's weeping. But he must not tell her yet, or he will ruin all.

Now come more significant omens—the old woman's prayer and the thunder of Zeus.

From this point on there is the feeling of forces gathering, as when a crowd begins thronging in upon a stage. One by one they enter, assembling in the great hall—Eumæus, Melanthius, Philœtius, and the haughty wooers, all gathering to be present at the coming feast.

A strange feature of this Book is the ominous, unquenchable laughter, the horror of incomprehensible darkness, the warning and flight of Theoclymenus. The end is in sight.

BOOK TWENTY-ONE

The bow is brought forward deliberately, without haste or excitement, our eyes following every step. We have time to know what is being prepared. The young Telemachus reveals firmer qualities and shows himself his father's son.

The arrogance of the wooers flames up before the final extinction. Yet, for all their pride, they cannot bend the bow. Their failure is one more portent of evil.

The wooers do not seriously fear that the beggar will bend the bow; yet even to hint that he may do so is an insult to the lords who have failed.

Penelope withdraws from the hall. The uneasy expectation increases. As this Book draws to its end one feels that the dreadful scene, so long awaited, is about to open. A curtain is about to rise. With the closing lines of the Book, the curtain rises.

BOOK TWENTY-TWO

Many writers can prepare for a great scene. Few can bring it off, and make it exceed the expectation they have aroused. Homer can do this. The actual slaying is more terrible than we dared to expect, and more triumphant. We shudder at the slaying, but we

exult with Odysseus. We may suffer with Antinoüs as the shaft finds its mark, but we feel the thrill of Odysseus as his hand looses each deadly arrow.

Homer avoids melodrama. He keeps his feet firmly upon reality. This is no effortless, easy victory, not even with a goddess to aid. The wooers make a brave fight. The trick of Melanthius brings them very near success: for a long time the outcome hangs uncertain. At last the gods decide the day.

We see decisive judgment upon those who plead for mercy—swift war-time decisions, life or death. We are horrified at the hanging of the women and the barbarous mutilation of Melanthius. Yet we can understand why Odysseus is stirred to so savage a vengeance. The world had no knowledge of Christian ideas of forgiveness. As in the Old Testament, punishment was stern and swift and bloody. Think of the fate of Jezebel, and what befell Sisera.

Homer, the realist, knew what battle meant—not only glory and victory, but blood and the smell of blood and stains to be cleansed away. He knew too that in a real world, the story would not end here. The slaying of the wooers would not end Odysseus' danger. There were the living men of Ithaca, still to be reckoned with.

BOOK TWENTY-THREE

Penelope cannot believe that the slayer of the wooers is Odysseus. She cannot believe Eurycleia; she cannot believe Odysseus; she cannot believe her own eyes—not even her own heart. Homer knew nothing of psychology and "inhibitions", but he knew the minds of men. Penelope has so long kept before her mind the thought that Odysseus will never come, has so long refused to believe any story that he was coming, has so sternly trained herself, year after year, not to let her-

self hope for his coming, that now, though he stands there before her, she cannot make herself believe.

But when the barriers do break—and the story of the bed gives just the touch needed to break them—she bursts into tears and falls into Odysseus' arms. That part of the tale is ended.

Yet there are the people of Ithaca still to be satisfied. Odysseus has won back his wife, but not his kingdom. The book ends with his plan, made quickly and surely to meet this new danger.

BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

The slain wooers go their way to the Land of Death. We have seen them slain; now we follow quietly in their steps over the threshold of the unseen, into the land of shadows. We see them taking their place among their new companions, in the eternal fellowship of the dead. Homer, always impartial, lets them tell their tale from their own side, justifying themselves and blaming Penelope and Telemachus and Odysseus. They plead well. A defending lawyer in court could hardly make out a better case. Yet the stern decision of our minds, the court before which they plead, is not altered by their story. They cannot win acquittal.

What helps most to make us feel that Odysseus is really again in his own land is his meeting with his aged father, Laërtes. Through it we get the glimpse back into his boyhood, the child walking with his father through the orchard rows. That glimpse, coming here at the end of the story, gives us the whole length and sweep of the man's life.

Probably the Dolius of this book is not the same Dolius who is father of the unpleasant and ill-fated pair, Melanthius and Melantho.

Some ask, "Why this second battle?" What else could there be? Homer may create improbable monsters, but he will not evade a plain fact. War was

inevitable. Odysseus had been long away from Ithaca. The younger men of the land had never seen him: the older men had forgotten him. He was no more than a name—an outsider who had suddenly come among them and slain men of their own blood, sons and brothers! But at the actual sight of this man Odysseus, no longer an empty name, one feels that even these men falter. This man is no outsider! What a leader for Ithaca! It takes no great miracle of Athene to bring lasting peace.

Would the story be incomplete if they did not "live happy ever after"? But they did, as Homer tells us. Zeus himself decrees a happy ending:

> "Let Odysseus
> Be king henceforth . . .
> And peace and plenty shall abound here
> For all alike."

And as we must go on to later years, we have the prophecy of Teiresias:

> "And your death
> Shall come upon you from the sea,
> The gentlest death of all, to take you
> When the soft burden of old age
> Weighs heavy on you, and around you
> Your people dwell at peace."

What novel ends more happily!

LIFE IN HOMER'S DAY

THE HOUSE

The Greek hall or palace may be reconstructed, partly from a study of the story as told by Homer, partly from the results of recent excavations, but we are not certain about its exact shape. We realize to-day that

there was great variety in the halls of kings and that we cannot possibly tell just how the particular hall of Odysseus may have been arranged.

The hall was a great room, as spacious as the interior of a good-sized church of to-day, and almost as high-roofed. It was heated by an open fire-place somewhere near the center. This had no chimney, but there was some kind of roof-opening, probably protected from rain, that let the smoke out. At night the hall was lighted by braziers—high metal stands that held blazing fires of pitchy wood. This hall would be richly decorated and would have a pillared entrance and polished doors, adorned with metal. There would probably be pillars about the fireplace. There seem to have been alcoves or pillared recesses at the sides.

At one end there was a polished stone threshold, apparently higher than the floor of the hall; perhaps there was such a threshold at both ends. It was on one of these that Odysseus took his position, bow in hand, to slay the wooers.

A door at one end, the entrance proper to the great hall, opened upon the portico and courtyard outside. The door at the other end led into the women's hall. It was this door that Eurycleia shut until the fight was over.

About the hall ran a passage. Possibly this ran all the way around, so that servants need not disturb the feasters. Somewhere close to the hall, stairs led up to a storeroom where Odysseus and his son laid away the arms. To this room Melanthius found his way through some sort of opening, probably a ventilation-hole in the wall of the hall itself.

Penelope's own room seems to have been upstairs, though just where it is hard to say.

In front of the hall was a portico, something like that in front of a Greek temple or of those public buildings of our day that imitate Greek temples. Out-

side of this was a walled courtyard, with gates and perhaps a portico of its own. This courtyard was at once a place for games and idling, and a sort of barnyard; for the wooers cast the discus here, and the old dog Argus lay here upon a heap of dung.

Inside the hall, the floor was for the most part of hardened stamped earth. Beasts were slaughtered here, and the meat seems to have been roasted at the open fire. The guests sat in chairs, on opposite sides of light little tables for two, placed along the wall. Tables and chairs were elaborate, but there were no forks or other table implements. The feasters ate with their hands, and one might even find a hoof lying in the baskets of meat. At least Ctesippus found one when he needed a missile.

The plan included at page 258 gives a possible arrangement of the hall of Odysseus, but it must not be taken too literally, for no one plan seems to fit all the happenings of the story.

DRESS

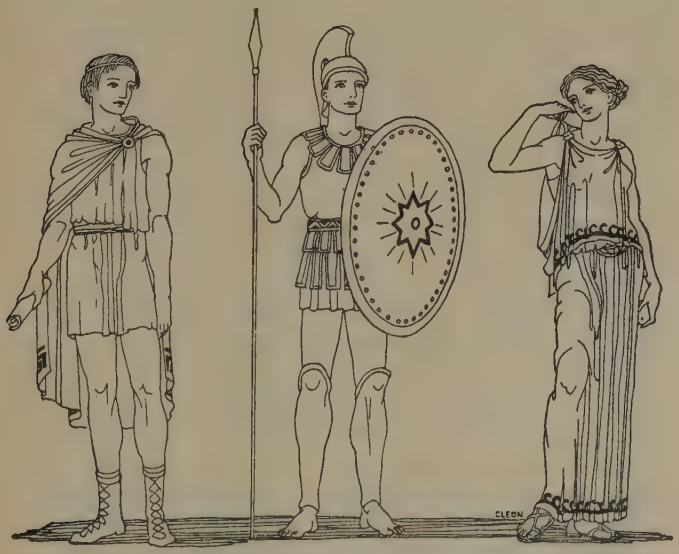
Men, except in war, had two chief garments—a tunic, a sort of long jacket-shirt, belted in; and a cloak to cover it. They wore sandals on their feet and had some sort of soft hat.

In war, sometimes they wore mail to cover the whole torso or central part of the body. At other times, they seem to have worn only a sort of mailed skirt and a helmet. The helmet might be only a close cap, or it might be an elaborate affair of bronze, with a high horsehair crest.

There was always a shield, sometimes small, sometimes of the sort that shelters the whole body of the bearer, reaching almost from head to feet. Both types seem to have been in use.

A man in time of war carried one or more spears with a long wooden shaft and a brazen point. Often he

had too, slung about his shoulders, a long sword, generally of bronze. A bow was not commonly used in battle, though we find instances of its use. Apparently Odysseus' use of the bow came from the fact that it was the most effective and handy weapon under the circumstances. Iron and even steel were slowly coming into use, but hardened bronze was still the usual metal for arms.



DRESS OF HOMER'S DAY

Women wore a long, rather full dress, draped loosely to the lines of the figure, not unlike the dress of modern women, though much longer than that worn in 1929. This was often brightly colored. Over it were worn scarves, mantles, veils, etc., partly for additional warmth, partly for adornment.

SHIPS

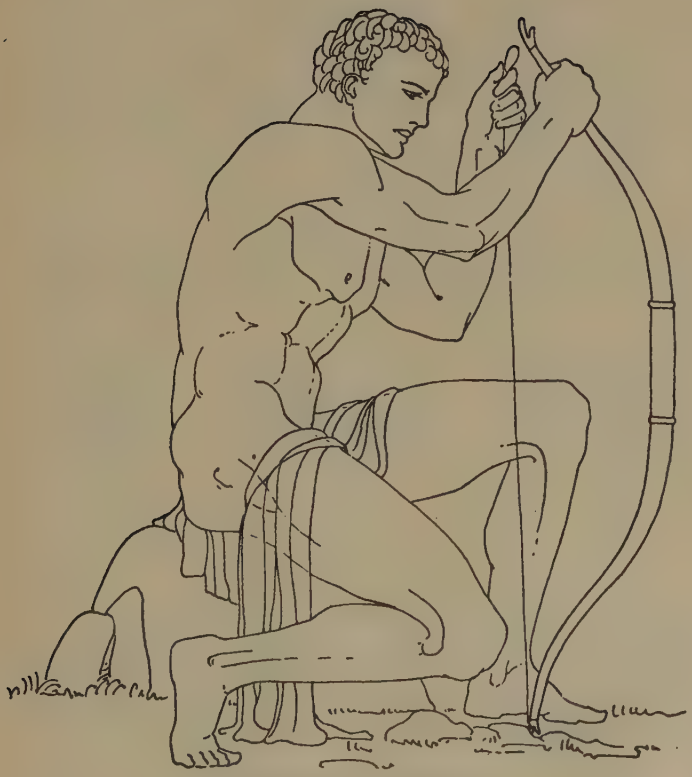
The Homeric ship was much like a whale-boat or seine-boat or life-boat, though on a somewhat larger scale. It was not unlike the viking ships of northern Europe. It was long, narrow, curving up at both ends, with fine sharp lines, so that it could be rowed easily. The stern was usually high and was adorned with carving. It was rowed by long heavy oars, probably with a broader and flatter blade than modern oars, more in the shape of a shovel. It was steered by steering-oars, one on each side. There was one big square sail, about in the center of the ship. This could be used only when the wind was favorable—behind, or on one side—not from ahead. Such ships might make some headway with a wind a point or two ahead, but could not "beat to windward" especially against any sea.

Small ships like this could be run up on the beach at night, especially in a tideless sea, like the Mediterranean. Probably rollers were used. This was safer than anchoring off an open coast, and was more comfortable. Except in emergency, ships seldom remained at sea over night. In safe harbors, where the ships were not drawn up, the stern was brought to shore and secured by cables, leading to rocks, etc., while at the bow anchors were lowered to keep the ship from swinging around.

Probably these ships were roughly about fifty feet long and ten or twelve feet wide, the merchant ships being wider than those meant for war or for swift travel. See the picture facing page 134.

THE BOW

The Greek bow seems to have been made of three pieces of horn—a straight middle piece, to hold the bow by, and two curved end-pieces.

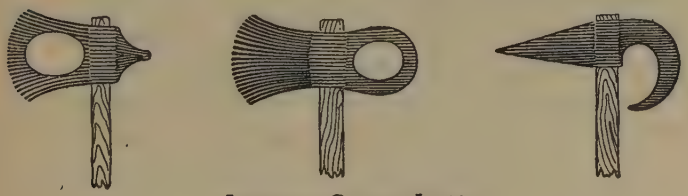


STRINGING THE BOW

In stringing such a bow, a man set one tip on the ground, against his foot. One end of the string was already fast to this lower tip. Then he would bend the bow so that he could slip the looped end of the string over the upper tip and catch it in the notch there. (If the loop was already around the upper end of the bow, he had to get it up to the notch.) To do either of these things required great strength and skill if the bow, like that of Odysseus, was large and strong.

SHOOTING THROUGH THE AXES

Probably the axes were much like those shown here. If such axes, with long wooden shafts, were set up in the ground in a line, a man might send an arrow



ANCIENT GREEK AXES

through all the ringed openings. To do this he would need a strong bow, drawn strongly back, for the arrow must be driven hard to fly with a flat trajectory—that is, without the least downward curve in its flight. And he must be not only a strong man but a good marksman.

OUTLINE OF THE ACTION

Arranged by Principal Characters with Page References

ODYSSEUS

Book — *Topics*

I. Discussed upon Olympus, 3.

V. Calypso's prisoner, 8; sent off on raft, 9; cast away on coast of Scheria, 10.

VI. Aroused by cry, asks help of Nausicaä, 16; follows to city, 27.

VII. Meets Athene, 28; guided to house of Alcinoüs, 29; suppliant before Alcinoüs, 34; kindly received, 35; tells tale partly true, 38.

VIII. Publicly welcomed as guest, 43; shows his skill at sports, 50; says farewell to Nausicaä, 55; weeps at minstrel's song, 46 and 59.

IX. Tells his name and begins tale of adventures, 63; battle with Ciconians, 64; reaches land of Lotus-eaters, 66; comes to island of goats, 67; to Cyclops' land, 70; enters cave, 72; his men eaten, 75; blinds Polyphemus, 80; escapes, 82; sails off, 85; taunts Cyclops, 85; rock thrown, 85 and 88; Cyclops prays Poseidon, 88.

X. Reaches island of Æolus, 90; receives sack of winds, 91; sack is opened, 92; returns and is denied help, 93; reaches land of Læstrygonians, 94; they wreck his ship and slay his men, 96; reaches Circe's island, 97; sends men to explore, 100; learns their fate, 102; sets out to rescue, 104; helped by Hermes, 104; escapes Circe's spell, 106; she restores men, 109; remains with her, 112; learns way to land of dead, 114.

Book *Topics*

XI. Goes to land of dead, 119; carries out due rites, 119; sees Elpenor, 120; Teiresias, 123; his mother, 122 and 126.

XII. Returns to Circe's island, 135; warned by her of dangers ahead, 137; sails, 142; encounters Sirens, 143; Scylla, 147; Charybdis, 146 and 156; reaches island of Sun, 147; his men slay the cattle, 152; the Sun is angry and appeals to Zeus, 153; Zeus destroys his ship, 155; he drifts upon mast and keel to Charybdis, 156; drifts to Calypso's island, 157; completes his tale, 157.

XIII. Receives gifts, 158; says farewell, 159; sails from Scheria on Phæacian ship, 161; arrives in Ithaca, 163; fails to know his own land, 167; counts his wealth, 169; meets Athene, 169; recognizes his own land, 174; takes counsel against wooers, 175; is transformed into beggar, 178.

XIV. Comes to the hut of Eumæus, 180; hears of conditions in Ithaca, 184; tells false tale, 189; tests Eumæus by a tale, 193.

XVI. Reveals himself to Telemachus, 203; plots vengeance on wooers, 204.

XVII. Sets out for the city, 213; insulted by Melanthius, 214; reaches his own house, 217; sees his old dog, 218; enters house as beggar, 220; struck by Antinoüs, 226; puts off meeting with Penelope, 231.

XVIII. Quarrel with Irus, 234; fight, 237; defeats him, 239; insulted by Melantho, 250 and 259; insulted by Eurymachus, 253.

Book *Topics*

XIX. Meets Penelope, 261; tells story about Odysseus, 264; recognized by Eurycleia, 273; story of hunt, 273; interprets Penelope's dream, 281.

XX. Indignant at immoral wooers, 284; encouraged by Athene, 285; hears Penelope weeping, 288; hears two good omens, 288; struck by Ctesippus, 298.

XXI. Reveals himself to Eumæus and herdsman, 313; completes his plans for vengeance, 315; asks to try bow, 317; obtains it, 322.

XXII. Shoots down Antinoüs, 326; slays Eurymachus, 330; arrows exhausted, 332; suitors get arms, 333; sends men to catch Melanthius, 335; aided by Athene, 336; routs wooers, 341; executes Leiodes, 342; spares Phemius, 343 and Medon, 344; sends for Eurycleia, 346; sends for guilty women, 348; cleanses hall, 350; sends for Penelope, 351.

XXIII. Not recognized by Penelope, 356; plans to mislead the Ithacans, 358; restored to beauty by Athene, 359; proves his identity to Penelope, 361; tells her his tale of adventures, 365; sets out for farm of Laërtes, 368.

XXIV. Reaches his father's farm, 373; meets his father, 374; tells false tale, 377; identifies himself, 378; joins others at meal, 380; prepares to meet attack of Ithacans, 385; fights them and routs them, 387; rejoices at peace with Ithacans, 388.

PENELOPE

XVII. Welcomes Telemachus and hears his story, 209; hears prophecy of Ancient of the Sea,

Book *Topics*

211; hears that stranger has been struck, 227; asks to see the stranger, 228; learns that he will see her later, 232.

XVIII. Inspired by Athene to appear before the wooers, 242; beautified by Athene, 243; appears before wooers, 244; rebukes them, asking gifts, 247; receives their gifts, 248.

XIX. Rebukes Melantho, 260; meets the stranger and hears his tale, 261; tells about the weaving, 263; hears stranger's description of Odysseus, 266; tells her dream and hears interpretation, 281.

XX. Laments her misfortunes and prays for death, 287; sits listening to the talk in the hall, 303.

XXI. Brings out the bow, 305; tells wooers to let stranger try the bow, 318; goes to her room at her son's command, 321.

XXIII. Refuses to believe Eurycleia's story of Odysseus' return, 352; meets him but is not convinced, 356; convinced by story of bed, 362; hears Odysseus' adventures and tells her own story, 365; receives his instructions to remain at home while he goes to his farm, 368.

TELEMACHUS

(The parts in parentheses refer to sections omitted in this translation.)

I. (Told by Athene to go in search of tidings of his father; speaks proudly to wooers; summons assembly for next morning.)

II. (Meets the wooers in assembly; complains of their conduct; breaks into tears; refuses to make

Book *Topics*

his mother decide whom to wed; sees good omen of eagles; asks for ship to go for tidings of his father; prays to Athene; aided by her, finds ship, crew, and stores; sails accompanied by Athene disguised as Mentor.)

III. (Meets Nestor at Pylus; goes with Nestor's son to visit Menelaüs at Sparta.)

IV. (Arrives at Sparta, meets Menelaüs and Helen; hears of his father and hears the prophecy of Proteus; the wooers plot against his life; *this journey is summarized by Homer in Book XVII—see below.*)

XV. Warned by Athene to return home, taking unusual course to escape wooers' ambush, 197; (he leaves Sparta and returns to Nestor); sails home, escaping ambush, and reaches lodge of Eumæus, 198.

XVI. Meets stranger, 200; sends Eumæus to city, 201; learns that the stranger is Odysseus, 203; plans with him vengeance upon wooers, 204.

XVII. Returns to the palace, 209; tells Penelope of his voyage (summary of Books III and IV), 210; protects the stranger from the wooers, 223.

XVIII. Insists upon fair play for stranger in fight with Irus, 237; speaks out boldly before wooers, 254.

XIX. Helps Odysseus remove the arms from the hall, 257.

XX. Wooers plan his death, but omen interferes, 296; he rebukes Ctesippus and protects the stranger, 299; refuses to force his mother to make decision, 301.

Book *Topics*

XXI. Arranges the axes for the trial with the bow, 309; tries to bend the bow, 309; orders bow carried to stranger and sends mother from the hall, 320; urges Eumæus to carry bow to stranger, 321.

XXII. Slays Amphinomus, 330; brings arms to his father and companions, 331; fights by father's side, slaying leading wooers, 341; intercedes for Phemius and Medon, 344; summons Eurycleia, 346; punishes the guilty women and Melanthius, 349.

XXIII. Blames his mother for her coldness to Odysseus, 357; is sent from the hall, 358; sets out with his father for the farm, 368.

XXIV. Fights by his father's side against the Ithacans, 386.

IMPORTANT PROPER NAMES

(With Pronunciation and Page References)

This table is not intended as a full index. Page references are given only in cases where the person or place appears prominently. For pronunciation of other proper names, see the table following this one. For full information regarding mythology, consult one of the works listed on page xxii.

For all references to Odysseus, Penelope, and Telemachus, see pages 414–419. Od. is used here for Odysseus; Pen. for Penelope; Tel. for Telemachus; Intro. for Introduction.

Achæans (*ȧ*-kē′-ănz) Used for practically all Greeks. *Argives* and *Danaäns* are used similarly.

Acheron (ăk′-ĕr-ŏn) A river in the land of the dead, 114 (*Cocytus*, *Pyriphlegethon*, and *Styx* are other rivers of the same place.)

Achilles (*ȧ*-kĭl′-ēz) Hero of the *Iliad*. Intro. xxvi; among the dead, 131 and 369.

Ææa (ē-ē′-*ȧ*) The island of Circe. See *Circe*, also Map II.

Ægis (ē-jĭs) A goatskin shield, borne by the gods Zeus and Athene. On it was the Gorgon's head. See *Gorgon*.

Ægisthus (ē-jĭs′-thŭs) See *Agamemnon*. His crime and punishment spoken of, 2.

Æolus (ē′-ō-lŭs) King of the island Æolia (ē-ō′-lĭ-a). Lord of the winds. Od. comes to his island, 90; he aids Od. on way, 91; drives him off as accursed, 93. Comment on, 398.

Agamemnon (ăg-*ȧ*-mĕm′-nŏn) King over all the Greeks be-

sieging Troy. Intro., xxvi. Among the dead, 130 and 370. He was slain by Ægisthus, his wife's lover.

Ajax (ā′-jăx) Greek hero second only to Achilles. Met among the dead, 369.

Alcinoüs (ăl-sĭn′-ō-ŭs) King of Phæacia, husband of Arete, father of Nausicaä. Sends daughter to shore, 13; welcomes Od., 35; opens council, 43; observes Od.'s grief, 46 and 59; justifies Od., 52; hears his tale, Books IX through XII; sends him home in ship, 161; resolves to aid no more strangers, 166. His house, 31; his gardens, 32.

Anticleia (ăn-tĭ-clī′-*a*). Mother of Od. Among the dead, 122 and 126.

Antinoüs (ăn-tĭn′-ō-ŭs) Chief of the wooers. Strikes Od., 226; urges fight with Irus, 235; directs trial with bow, 310; slain by Od., 326.

Aphrodite (ăf-rō-dī′-tē) The Roman Venus, goddess of love and beauty. Intro., xxv.

Apollo (*a*-pŏl′-ō) God of light, song, the bow, etc. Intro., xxi.

Ares (ā′-rēz) The Roman Mars, god of war.

Arete (ă-rē′-tē) Wife of Alcinoüs, mother of Nausicaä. Described, 30; hears Od.'s story, Books IX through XII; gives Od. chest, 55.

Argives (är′jīvz) See *Achæans*.

Argos (är′-gŏs) The southern part of the lower peninsula of Greece.

Argos (är′-gŏs) Odysseus' old dog. He sees his master and dies, 218.

Artemis (är′-tĕ-mĭs) The Roman Diana, goddess of maidenhood, the hunt, and the moon. Penelope prays to her for death, 287.

Athene (*a*-thē′-nē) The Roman Minerva. Intro., xxi and xxv; also, 401. Appeals to Zeus to aid Od., 2; sends Nausicaä to the shore, 11; awakes Od., 16; guides him

to house of Alcinoüs, 28; reveals him to Alcinoüs, 33; marks cast of discus, 50; advises Od. on arrival in Ithaca, 169; tells him to reveal himself to son, 202; makes him young and handsome, 22, 202, and 360; beautifies Penelope, 243; reassures Od., 285; suggests to Pen. to get bow, 305; aids Od. in fight with wooers, 336, 339, 340 and 341; prolongs fight, 364; ends it, 367; helps against Ithacans, 385 and 387; makes peace with consent of Zeus, 384 and 388.

Autolycus (ô-tŏl′-ĭ-kŭs) Grandfather of Od., 273. Names him, 273; welcomes him, 274.

Calypso (kȧ-lĭp′-sō) Nymph and goddess. Described, 3; receives Hermes, 7; sends Od. away, 9.

Charybdis (kȧ-rĭb′-dĭs) A sea-monster. Described by Circe, 140; seen by Od., 146; seen by him again, 156. Comment, 400.

Ciconians (sĭ-kō′-nĭ-ănz) A people first plundered by Od.'s men, then in battle with them, 64. See Map I.

Circe (sûr′-sē) An enchantress, nymph, and goddess, dwelling on the island of Ææa. Comment upon, 398. Turns Od.'s men to swine, 101; fails to enchant him, 106; restores his men, 109; directs him to land of dead, 113; welcomes him back and directs him on future journey, 136.

Cronus (krō′-nŭs) Father of Zeus, god before Zeus.

Cyclops (sī′-klŏps) A race of one-eyed giants. Comment, 396. Used also of Polyphemus, the Cyclops Od. met. (See *Polyphemus.*) For description of the Cyclops and their land, see p. 67.

Demodocus (dĕ-mŏd′-ō-kŭs) Phæacian minstrel. Intro., xv. Comment upon, 395. Sings in the hall, 45 and 57. Honored by Od., 56.

Elpenor (ĕl-pē′-nôr) Follower of Od. Killed by fall, 116; among dead, 120; funeral rites, 135. Comment, 399.

Eumæus (ū-mē′-ŭs) Faithful swineherd. Receives Od., 180; gives warm cloak, 195; guides to palace, 213; learns stranger is Od., 312; catches and punishes Melanthius, 335; fights beside Od., 336 and 385. Note upon, 182.

Eupithes (ū-pī′-thēz) Father of Antinoüs. Arouses Ithacans, 382; slain by Laërtes, 387.

Eurycleia (ū-rĭ-klī′-*a*) Faithful old nurse of Od. Welcomes Tel., 209; washes Od.'s feet and recognizes scar, 271; locks women in room, 322; finds Od. standing among slain, 346; tells Pen. of return of Od. and victory over wooers, 352.

Eurylochus (ū-rĭl′-ō-kŭs) Follower of Od. Leads men to Circe's house, 100; brings back news of their fate, 102; refuses to go again, 111; insists on landing on isle of Sun, 148; incites men to kill cattle of Sun, 151.

Eurymachus (ū-rĭm′-*a*-kŭs) A wooer. Insults Od., 253; ridicules omen, 302; fails to bend bow, 316; asks peace of Od. and is slain, 328.

Gorgon. A monster with snaky hair. The sight of her face turned men to stone. Her head was in the ægis.

Hades (hā′-dēz) The Roman Pluto, god of the dead, husband of Persephone.

Helen. Wife of Menelaüs. Cause of the Trojan war. Intro., xxv; at home of Menelaüs, 210.

Hellas. The ancient name for what we now call Greece.

Hephæstus (hē-fĕs′-tŭs) The Roman Vulcan, god of fire and of fine art in metals.

Hera or **Here** (hē′-*ra* or hē′-rē) The Roman Juno, wife of Zeus. Intro., xxv.

Hermes (hûr′-mēz) The Roman Mercury, messenger of the gods. Meaning of name applied to him, 393; bears message to Calypso, 5; gives Od. moly, 104; guides slain wooers to land of dead, 369.

Ilium (ĭl′-ĭ-ŭm) Troy. Intro., xxv.

Ithaca (ĭth′-*ȧ*-k*ȧ*) Native island and city of Od. Map I. Described, 63, 170 and 174.

Laërtes (lā-ûr′-tēz) Father of Od. Meets Od., 374; slays Eupithes, 387.

Læstrygonians (lĕs-trĭg-ō′-nĭ-ănz) Cannibal giants. Comments, 398; Od. reaches their land, 94; they destroy his ships and men, 96. Map II.

Leiodes (lī-ō′-dēz) Priest among the wooers. Tries bow, 310; slain by Od., 342.

Lotus-eaters. Visited by Od., 66. Map II. Comment, 396.

Medon (mē′-dŏn) Faithful herald. Spared by Od., 344.

Melanthius (mĕl-ăn′-thĭ-ŭs) Disloyal goatherd. Insults Od., 214 and 222; fetches arms for wooers, 333; caught, 335; slain, 350.

Melantho (mĕl-ăn′-thō) Sister of the above, disloyal. Reviles Od., 250 and 259.

Menelaüs (mĕn-ē-lā′-ŭs) Brother of Agamemnon (both are sons of Atreus, therefore each is called *Atrides*). Visited by Telemachus, Book IV; also 210.

Mentor. A friend of Odysseus. Athene appears in his form, 336 and 388.

Muses. Minor goddesses who presided over song and other arts. See opening line of *Odyssey*, also 45 and 57.

Nausicaä (nô-sĭk′-ă-*ȧ*) Daughter of Alcinoüs. Visited by Athene, 11; asks father for cart and goes washing, 13; meets Od., 17; advises Od., 24; returns to city, 27; reaches home, 28; says farewell to Od., 55.

Nestor. A wise old king, prominent in the *Iliad*. Visited by Telemachus.

Odysseus (ō-dĭs′-sūs) For page references, see p. 414. For origin of name, see p. 273.

Ogygia (ō-jĭj′-ĭ-*ȧ*) Calypso's island. Map II.

Olympus (ō-lĭm′-pŭs) Home of the gods. Intro., xix. Map I. Described, 12.

Patroclus (pȧ-trō′-klŭs) Friend of Achilles. Intro., xxvi; comment upon, 369.

Penelope (pĕ-nĕl′-ŏ-pē) For page references, see p. 416. Comments on character, 406.

Persephone (pêr-sĕf′-ŏ-nē) The Roman Proserpina, goddess of the dead, wife of Hades. Much spoken of in Book VI.

Phæacia (fē-ā′-shĭ-ȧ) A mythical country, far off from Ithaca. Intro., xxxiv; comment upon, 395. Map II. It appears chiefly in Books VI to XIII.

Phemius (fē′-mĭ-ŭs) Minstrel to the wooers. Spared by Od., 343.

Philœtius (fĭ-lē′-tĭ-ŭs) Faithful herdsman. Comes to palace, 293; learns the stranger is Od., 312; aids Eumæus, 335 and 385.

Polyphemus (pŏl-ĭ-fē′-mŭs) The Cyclops met by Od. (See *Cyclops*). His cave, 72; he enters, 73; devours Od.'s men, 75; is blinded, 80; sends out ram, 83; throws great rocks at ship, 85 and 88; prays Poseidon for vengeance upon Od. and his men, 88.

Poseidon (pŏ-sī′-dŏn) God of the sea. Intro., xxi; persecutes Od., 2; destroys Od.'s raft, 9; complains to Zeus about Phæacians, 164; changes ship to rock and threatens city, 166.

Priam (prī′-ăm) Aged king of Troy. Intro., xxv.

Scheria (skĕ′-rĭ-ȧ) The same as Phæacia.

Scylla (sĭl′-lȧ) A monster, close to Charybdis. Described by Circe, 138; snatches six of Od.'s men, 147. Comment, 400.

Sirens (sī′-rĕnz) Monsters with beautiful faces and voices. They devoured sailors attracted to land by their song. Described by Circe, 137; seen and heard by Od., 143.

Teiresias (tī-rē′-sĭ-ăs) Aged prophet. Od. consults him among the dead, 123.

Telemachus (tē-lĕm′-*a*-kŭs) For page references, see p. 417.

Zeus (zūs) King over all gods, lord of Olympus, the thunderer, son of Cronus. See Intro., xx. Conducts council of gods, 2; consents to punish Od. on complaint of the Sun, 154; permits Poseidon to punish Phæacians, 166; sends thunder as good omen, 288; establishes peace in Ithaca, 384.

PRONUNCIATION OF PROPER NAMES

Æëtes (ē-ē′-tēz)
Agelaüs (ă-jĕ-lā′-ŭs)
Alcimus (ăl′-sĭ-mŭs)
Alybas (ăl′-ĭ-bas)
Amphimedon (ăm-fĭm′-ē-dŏn)
Amphinomus (ăm-fĭn′-ō-mŭs)
Amphitrite (ăm-fĭ-trī′-tē)
Andræmon (ăn-drē′-mŏn)
Antiphates (ăn-tĭf′-*a*-tēz)
Apheidas (ă-fī′-das)
Arcesius (är-sē′-sĭ-ŭs)
Arethusa (ăr-ē-thū′-sa)
Arnæus (är-nē′-ŭs)
Artacia (är-tā′-sĭ-*a*)
Atreus (ā′-trōos)
Atrides (ā-trī′-dēz)
Cephallenians (sĕf-ăl-lē′-nĭ-ănz)
Ciconians (sĭ-kō′-nĭ-ănz)
Cimmerian (sĭ-mē′-rĭ-ăn)
Cocytus (kō-sī′-tŭs)
Cratæis (kra-tē′-ĭs)
Ctesippus (tē-sĭp′-pŭs)
Cyllenian (sĭ-lē′-nĭ-ăn)
Cythera (sĭ-thē′-ra)
Cytherea (sĭth-ẽr-ē′-*a*)
Damastor (dă-măs′-tôr)
Deïphobus (dē-ĭf′-ō-bŭs)
Demoptolemus (dē-mŏp-tŏl′-ē-mŭs)
Doulichium (dōō-lĭk′-ĭ-ŭm)
Dymas (dī′-mas)
Echeneüs (ĕk-ē-nē′-ŭs)
Echetus (ĕk′-ē-tŭs)
Elis (ē′-lĭs)
Epeians (ē-pē′-ănz)
Epeius (ē-pē′-ŭs)
Eperitus (ē-pĕr′-ĭ-tŭs)
Erechtheus (ē-rĕk′-thūs)
Erymanthus (ĕr-ĭ-măn′-thŭs)
Ethiopians (ē-thĭ-ō′-pĭ-ănz)
Eubœa (ū-bē′-*a*)
Euryades (ū-rī′-*a*-dēz)
Euryalus (ū-rī′-*a*-lŭs)
Eurybates (ū-rĭb′-*a*-tēz)
Eurydamas (ū-rĭd′-*a*-mas)
Eurylochus (ū-rĭl′-ō-kŭs)

Eurynome (ū-rĭn′-ō-mē)
Evenor (ē-vē′-nôr)
Halitherses (hă-lĭ-thûr′-sēz)
Heracles (hĕr′-*ȧ*-klēz)
Hippotas (hĭp′-pō-t*ȧs*)
Icarius (ĭ′kā′-rĭ-ŭs)
Idomeneus (ī-dŏm′-ē-nūs)
Irus (ī′-rŭs)
Ismarus (ĭs′-mā-rŭs)
Itylus (ĭt′-ĭ-lŭs)
Lacedæmon (lăs-ē-dē′-mŏn)
Laodamas (lā-ŏd′-*ȧ*-m*ȧs*)
Leiocritus (lī-ō′-krĭ-tŭs)
Maleia (mā-lē′-*ȧ*)
Melaneus (mē-lān′-ūs)
Mesaulius (mē-sô′-lĭ-ŭs)
Mycenæ (mī-sē′-nē)
Naiads (nā′-yădz)
Neæra (nē-ē′-r*ȧ*)
Nericus (nĕr′-ĭ-cŭs)
Neriton (nĕr′-ĭ-tŏn)
Nymphs (nĭmfs)
Œnops (ē′-nŏps)
Pandareus (păn-dā′-rē-ŭs)
Parnassus (pär-năs′-sŭs)
Peisander (pī-săn′-dēr)
Perimedes (pĕ-rĭ-mē′-dēz)
Pheidon (fī′-dŏn)
Phœnicians (fē-nĭsh′-ănz)
Phorcys (fôr′-sĭs)
Polybus (pŏl′-ĭ-bŭs)
Polyctor (pō-lĭk′-tôr)
Polypemon (pŏl-ĭ-pē′-mŏn)
Polytherses (pŏl-ĭ-thûr′-sēz)
Pontonoüs (pŏn-tŏn′-ō-ŭs)
Rhadamanthus (răd-*ȧ*-măn′-thŭs)
Same (sā′-mē)
Sicania (sĭ-cā′-nĭ-*ȧ*)
Styx (sticks)
Taÿgetus (tā-ĭj′-ē-tŭs)
Terpes (tûr′-pēz)
Thebes (thēbz)
Theoclymenus (thē-ō-clĭm′-ē-nŭs)
Thesprotians (thĕs-prō′-tĭ-ănz)
Thoas (thō′-ăs)
Thrinacia (thrĭn-ā′-shĭ-*ȧ*)
Tithonus (tĭ-thō′-nŭs)
Tityus (tĭt′-ĭ-ŭs)
Zacynthus (zā-sĭn′-thŭs)

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